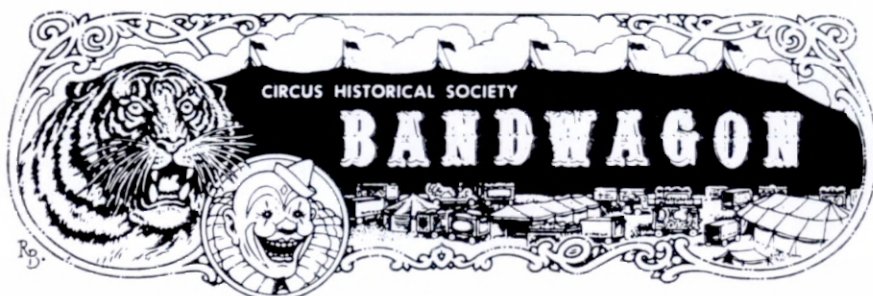


Bandwagon

THE JOURNAL OF THE CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY



MARCH-APRIL 1979



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Emmett Kelly Dies

Emmett Kelly, perhaps America's best known clown died at his home in Sarasota, Florida, on March 28, 1979. He was 80 years of age.

Born in Sedan, Kansas, on December 9, 1898, he began in show business with a cartoon act on a carnival. Howe's Great London Circus in 1922, was his first circus job, as a trapeze performer. He remained with the various American Circus Corporation shows through 1934. In the late 1920s he and his first wife Eva presented a double trap act as the Aerial Kellys.

A number of the tableau wagons appearing in the great Hagenbeck-Wallace parade in 1934 were decorated with his paintings.

Many of the 1934 H-W personnel went with their boss Jess Adkins to the new Cole Bros. Clyde Beatty Circus in 1935. By this time he had quit appearing in the air and had settled on a tramp clown costume that was to become his trademark. Emmett and Eva parted when

he went with the Cole show, each taking responsibility for one son. Emmett took the older boy Emmett Jr., who has followed in his father's image, costume, routine and all.

While the Cole show was in New York at the Hippodrome in 1937 Kelly was

seen by Bernard Mills, and was signed for the Bertram Mills Christmas Circus in London. He was asked to remain for the summer tenting tour, but returned to the United States to fulfill winter Shrine contracts. He returned to the Cole show.

In 1942 Kelly moved to the Ringling-Barnum Circus and remained for many years. Leaving the big one after the closing under canvas in 1956 he spent a year entertaining with the Brooklyn Dodgers baseball team. He also appeared in motion pictures, television and on Broadway. In recent years he spent the summer seasons at a resort in Nevada.

The photo on our cover was taken at the Chicago Stadium date of the Cole-Beatty Circus in 1937. Photo from Pfening collection.

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THE FLOYD AND HOWARD KING RAILROAD CIRCUSES 1925-30

by Joseph T. Bradbury

Part VI — The 1930 Season Cole Bros. Circus, 10 Cars

January 1, 1930 wasn't a happy New Year's day for Floyd King. He and his brother, Howard's, 15 car Gentry Bros. Circus had ended in bankruptcy the previous October. Their 10 car Cole Bros. Circus was in quarters at Brenham, Texas but on hand were only 5 railroad cars as the Warren Tank Car Co. had repossessed the four flats and elephant car the firm had sold the King's a few years earlier. Although Cole Bros. had done fairly well itself during the 1929 season the show's profits had been drained off to help support the Gentry show as long as it could. As a result the brothers were unable to keep up with the payments due Warren on the Cole cars so shortly after the season closed the cars were taken back by that company. Howard King was now out of the picture entirely and Floyd had the lonely task of trying to pick up the pieces of their once healthy circus business, find replacement railroad equipment and hopefully find new money, or at least secure adequate credit, so Cole Bros. could go out in 1930.

The economic experts were uncertain as to the duration and extent of the depression which had set in following the stock market crash on Black Friday back in October 1929. Few expected it to last very long and none had any idea the depression would be as severe and long lasting as it was. Most showmen were expecting a big 1930 season and none were more optimistic than the king, John Ringling, who would be fielding a total of 6 railroad circuses. Independent rail show operators George W. Christy, Fred Buchanan, and Col. Zack Miller likewise were expecting a good season. It must be recalled that for most shows 1929 had been a very profitable year. The King's misfortune was an exception. A run of extremely bad weather in both 1928 and 1929 had heavily contributed to the Gentry failure. Floyd King was of the opinion that since the ten car show had done well in recent seasons if he could only get it back on the road for the 1930 season that in time he could make a comeback and recover his losses.

The Central Circus Corporation was

formed during the early weeks of 1930 in a financial reorganization to replace the old King partnership. Floyd was unable to find anyone willing to put fresh money into the venture but through his many contacts and friends he had made in the industry was able to secure adequate credit which would carry him into the new season.

In his interview Floyd said he acquired railroad cars from the Venice Transportation Co. of East St. Louis, Illinois to replace those repossessed by Warren. He didn't go into detail on the financial arrangement made with Venice but in all probability it was a lease-purchase deal.

King said his biggest help came from Thomas Hanks, owner of the National Printing and Engraving Co. of Chicago, who provided him with very generous credit on his billing paper needs for the show during the 1930 season. A mortgage on all equipment was given Hanks as security.

Never before had operating money been so tight for Floyd King as during the winter of 1929-30 but at least he had enough to carry on the necessary

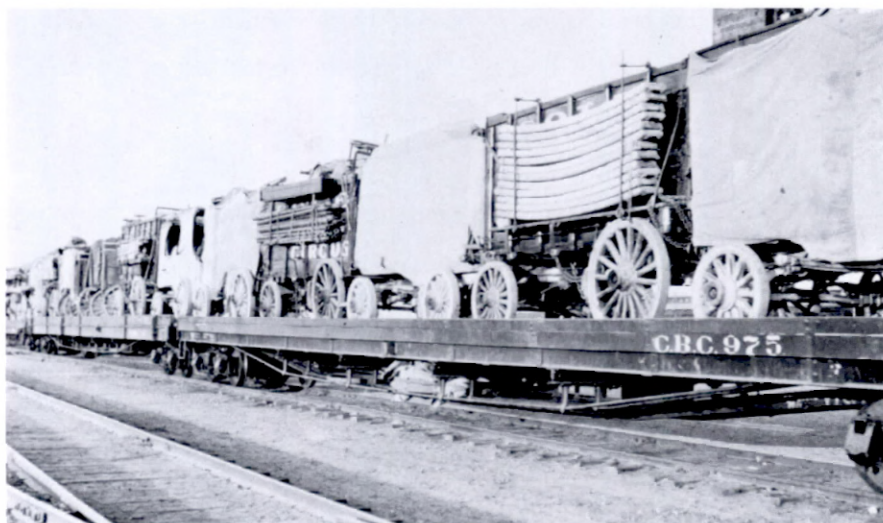
winterquarters activities to put the Cole Bros. rolling stock into shape for the coming season. However, by opening day there was practically nothing left in the grouch bag. During the winter and then on into the 1930 season King learned to operate his show on the proverbial shoe-string and soon gained a reputation which would last through his long career in circus business as being able to run a circus longer on "nothing" than any other circus owner in history.

The circus world was kept informed early in the new year on King's activities in the following item which appeared in the Jan. 11, 1930 *Billboard*.

"Brenham, Texas, Jan 4—The Cole Bros. Show has comfortable winter quarters here about two blocks from the main part of the city. The quarters are in a large brick warehouse near the Southern Pacific tracks and freight depot, and the stock, which has been brought in from the country, is now in a corral near by. Dave Matson, who was formerly with the Honest Bill Shows and last season electrician on the Cole Bros. Show, is in charge, and there are about 10 men looking after the outfit."

With assurances of replacement railroad equipment and credit to do the necessary renovation on the

Photo No. 2—Cole Bros. Circus loaded flat cars at Douglas, Arizona, April 11, 1930. Photo by Charles Puck.



remainder of the physical equipment King took steps to secure adequate personnel and put together a creditable performance for the new season. The following advertisement appeared in the Feb. 15, 1930 *Billboard*.

"Cole Bros. Circus Wants for Season 1930. Big Show Performers, Riding Act without stock, acrobatic act, Double Trap acts, Wire acts, Menage Riders, Clowns, etc. FOR SIDE SHOW. Want competent and experienced Side Show Manager. Punch and Magic who can make Second Openings. Impalement Act, Bag Puncher, Snake Lady, Novelty Acts, and Dancers, experienced Colored Band Leader and Sideshow Musicians, including Flageolet Player. Big Show Musicians, address W.E. Tyree, Band Leader, Brenham, Texas. Cook House Help address Jack Walsh, Brenham, Texas; Can Place, now, Blacksmith, also Carpenter. Can place Side Show Boss Canvasman. Other bosses have been engaged. Show opens late in March. Accommodations the best. Address Cole Bros. Circus, Brenham, Texas." The advertisement concluded with a short statement that this is a 15 car circus, which most readers would know was 5 cars too many.

The March 1, 1930 *Billboard* said the Cole show had experienced spring-like weather of late and as a result a great deal of the quarters work is being done outdoors. The shops have been busy for several weeks and more than a score of wagons are now undergoing painting. It was stated that when the show opens the latter part of March the equipment will be in the same state of excellence that has characterized it in former seasons. Other notes said that Mark Smith, boss canvasman, who had been hibernating at his home in Alexandria, La. was a recent arrival in quarters. New seats and jacks are being built. Jack Walsh, commissary superintendent, has completed the overhauling of the cookhouse



paraphernalia. Dave Masten, superintendent, has been in active charge of the quarters throughout the winter. Abe Spencer, boss hostler, is back after a fortnight visit in Hot Springs. The horses are now in the stables after spending the winter on a nearby farm. Dutch Shafer, harness maker, is building several new sets of harnesses. Final notes said that Bill Hayes, animal superintendent, has added several new feats to the elephant act which has always been a big feature of the big show program. Two lions were born on Valentine's Day. John Chaisson of the big show ticket department is a new arrival after spending the winter in Chicago. Bill Tyree, bandleader, has completed his personnel. There will be 18 men in his band, augmented by an air calliope.

News from the Cole quarters was appearing in the trade publications almost weekly now and the March 8, 1930 *Billboard* had this story.

"COLE BROS. OPENING LATTER PART OF MARCH. Brenham, Texas,

Photo No. 1—Cole Bros. Circus loaded flat cars at Douglas, Arizona, April 11, 1930. These were the four flats that Floyd King acquired from the Venice Transportation Company. Last wagon is No. 116, light plant. Part of one of the show's coaches can be seen on adjacent track. Photo by Charles Puck.

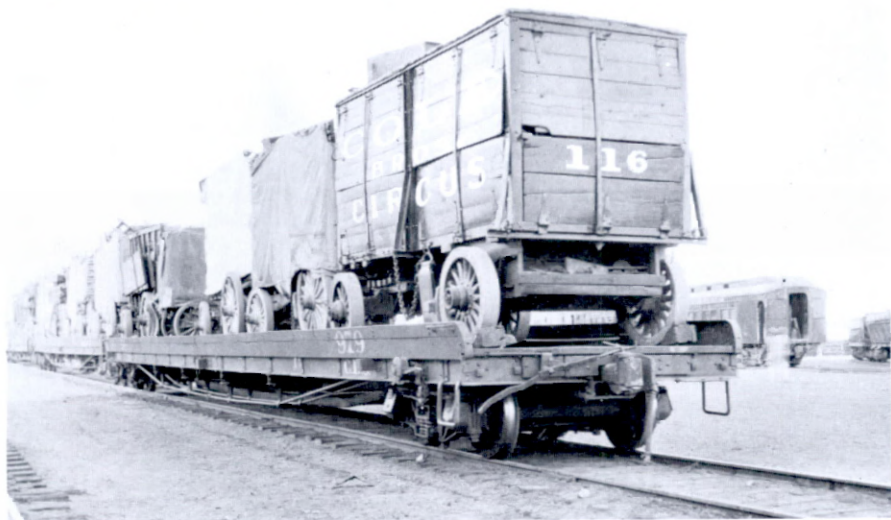


Photo No. 3—Train teams stand ready to unload Cole Bros. flat cars at Douglas, Arizona, April 11, 1930. Part of the show's coaches are on left. Photo by Charles Puck.

March 1—Work of rebuilding and outfitting the Cole Bros. Circus is going forward rapidly here in winter quarters. Superintendent Dave Masten has increased the working crew and will soon have the last wagon in readiness for the painters. The show will open its season the latter part of March.

"Karl Knudson, local contractor, recently arrived from his home in Los Angeles, and is busy ahead with his duties. Gene Staats, manager of the No. 1 advance car, was in quarters for a few hours last week. L.C. Gillette, general agent, is back in quarters after spending the last fortnight in the north. Altho a complete line of special paper was carried last season, yet more than a dozen new designs have been added.

"Gus Schwab, legal adjuster, was a recent visitor. After a few weeks looking after his hotel at Bethel, O., he will return here. Jack Mills, banner solicitor, has completed his season's ad for the daily magazine and program review. He is resting at his home in Cleveland before beginning his season's duties.

"Frank Orman is expected to arrive soon from his home in Cincinnati. Cecil Labell and Tom Crum are still in Hot Springs, Ark. taking the baths. Dolly West, aerialist, has reached Brenham after spending the winter with relatives in Chicago.

"The menagerie, in charge of Bill Hayes, is visited each Sunday by many residents of this section of the state."

These little reports, many items of a semi social nature, were typical of winterquarter gossip that were printed in the *Billboard* in those days. The March 15, 1930 *Billboard* continued with this news report from the Cole Show.

"COLE BROS. ACTIVITIES., Brenham, Texas, March 8—The road tour of the Cole Bros. Circus wintering at the fairgrounds here (Author's note, possibly a change of quarters location in Brenham took place, however it is doubtful. Probably some animals, per-

sonnel, were quartered at the fairgrounds while the show's shops were located in the large brick warehouse near the downtown area as reported earlier), will be inaugurated the latter part of this month. When the show takes to the road this season it will prove a revelation among circuses of its size. The entire train is of steel construction, excepting the coaches. Blackie Baker, trainmaster, who has been wintering in Galesburg, Ill., is expected soon. It will be his seventh season with the show.

"Mark Smith, boss canvasman, has completed building eight new lengths of reserved seats. They are out of the paint shop and loaded in the seat wagons ready for loading. Andy Hailey, side show boss canvasman, is busy outfitting his department. Jack Walsh, who has charge of the dining tent in quarters and on the road, is back in quarters after attending the Mardi Gras in New Orleans.

"Gus Schwab is a late arrival. He has been spending the winter at his hotel in Bethel, O. L.C. Gillette, general agent, has been in and out of quarters several times in the last few weeks. Gene Staats, car manager, who has been wintering in Chicago, will assume his duties within the next few days.

"Jack Besser, superintendent of candy stands, is expected in shortly. Several of his men are in the city awaiting his arrival. M.C. Carter, time keeper, who has been hibernating in Alexandria, La., is a late arrival as well as Joe McDonald, ring stock boss, and John Chaisson, of the big show's ticket department."

The final *Billboard* report from the Cole Bros. quarters came in the March 29, 1930 issue. The same also carried the official personnel roster for the season. The article read as follows.

"COLE CIRCUS OPENING AT UVALDE, TEXAS, MARCH 29. Brenham, Texas, March 22—Cole Bros. Circus will inaugurate its season at Uvalde, Texas, March 29. The performers, musicians and attaches will gather in Brenham for the rehearsals. Many employees have already arrived in advance of the official call.

"When the show opens the equipment will rank as among the best ever carried with a one train railroad show. All of the wagons, train and other equipment have been thoroughly overhauled and painted. The stock, which has been on pasture a great part of the winter, is now in quarters. Abe Spencer, boss hostler, has the stock in the best condition. The elephants, hay-eating animals and the wild animals carried in the menagerie are in excellent shape.

"A big show program of merit embodying all the salient features of the old-time circus, together with new and original novelties, will be seen."

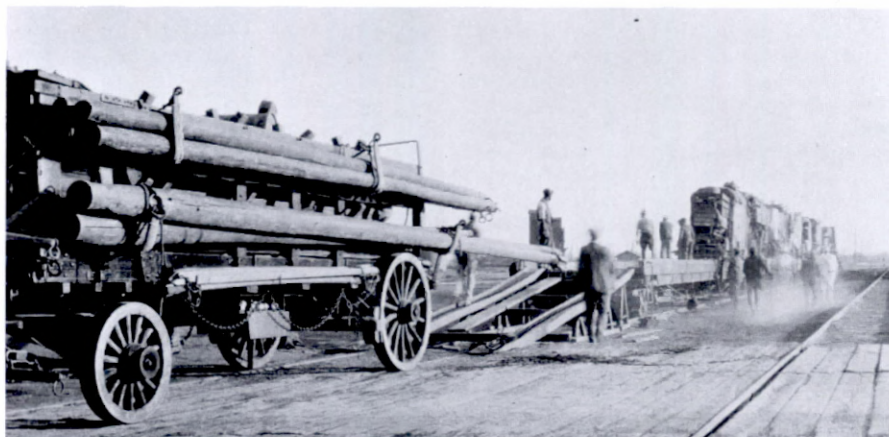


Photo No. 4—Cole Bros. big top pole wagon has just come down the unloading runs at Douglas, Arizona, April 11, 1930. Photo by Charles Puck.

Cole Bros. 1930 Roster

Central Circus Corporation, prop; Floyd King, manager; Harold Frederick, treasurer; M.C. Carter, secretary; L.C. Gillette, general agent; Karl Knudson, local contractor; Joe Hunter, special agent; Frank Brown, contracting press agent; Earl Brown, advance press agent; Al Wilson, press agent back; Frank A. Goldie, asst. sideshow manager; Tom Welsh, equestrian director; Frank Orman, superintendent; Jake Besser, supt. privileges; W.E. Tyree, musical director; John Chaisson, supt. reserve seat tickets; Mark Smith, supt. canvas; Blackie Baker, trainmaster; Abe Spencer, boss hostler; Jack Welsh, supt. commissary dept.; Dave Masten, supt. lights; Slim Williams, supt., properties; W. Hargreaves, supt., ring stock; F. Jasper, supt. working crew; Jack Mills, 24 hour agent; Bill Hayes, supt. elephants; Julius Ireland, boss carpenter; F. Eckhart, supt. animals; August Scharles, blacksmith; Gene Staats, manager advance car; John Birch, checker-up; Gus Schwab, legal adjuster; Pete Nolan, announcer.

It will be noted in the roster there had been some personnel changes within the last few weeks prior to the season's opener. Also no sideshow manager was mentioned earlier in the roster or in later reports after the show was on the road. A full sideshow was carried as well as a pitshow with operation of both on the order of previous seasons.

Despite the scarcity of operating funds in 1930 the show put up a considerable amount of billing paper furnished by the National Printing and Engraving Company of Chicago and several reports in the trade publications said there were more than a dozen new designs in use. The show's press department was also strong and active. Several press book circus stories, many done in the typical Floyd King manner, and a number of

newspaper advertisement mats were widely used during the season. The courier with the Cole Bros. title and special design which had been used the previous season continued to be distributed in 1930. The services of *Circus Magazine* were used to carry the show's printed program and was sold at performances for 15 cents.

The 1930 Cole Bros. Circus traveled on 10 cars which included 1 advance, 2 stocks, 4 flats, and 3 coaches. Other than the rail equipment the 10 car show had changed very little in its physical appearance since its initial appearance in 1926. Thanks to the marvelous set of photos the late Charles Puck took of the Cole show at Douglas, Arizona, April 11, 1930 we have the best photographic coverage of the King's ten car show of any of the five seasons it was on the road, especially of the train, wagons, and parade. The entire set of Puck photos is printed in this article.

The four flat cars King got from the Venice Transportation Company were all 70 ft. long and although both the company and the circus termed them as steel cars, actually they were what was commonly referred to as "semi steel" in those days. Note the supporting truss rods under the cars. These rods were common to all such semi steel cars and the new all steel flats which were manufactured by Mt. Vernon, Keith, and Warren did not have them. (Author's note. In anticipation of some experts calling me on this statement, indeed some of Warren's cars had lesser capacity than their more common variety and were equipped with supporting rods, some of these cars lasted on Ringling-Barnum into the 1950's, but they were the exception.) The Venice flats used by Cole in 1930 were numbered but lettered only with the initials CBC. These cars were perfectly adequate for the show's needs and gave good service. In fact in 1929 when Sells-Floto enlarged from 30 to 40 cars after a few weeks into the season that show put into use a couple of the same type of Venice flat cars.

Photos indicate the Cole Bros.



Photo No. 5—Cole Bros. No. 1 Bandwagon (Gollmar Four Mirror) with six horse hitch ready to leave the lot at Douglas, Arizona, April 11, 1930 for the morning street parade. Photo by Charles Puck.

coaches were lettered with the full title and in all probability the stock cars were also. A notation in the *Billboard* said the Cole rail cars were painted red and yellow. The Puck photos do indicate the base of the flats and coaches were red with title in either yellow or white.

A close examination of the Cole flat car photos printed here indicate that 22 pieces of equipment loaded on the four flats. Also by use of these photos we have been able to reconstruct an "unofficial" train loading order which is as follows.

Cole Bros. 1930 Flat Car Loading Order.

Flat No. 1: (1)—No. 55, box type baggage wagon, poles on side; (2)—Box type baggage wagon, poles on side; (3)—No. 123, poles and stringer wagon; (4)—Water wagon; and (5)—Ticket wagon.

Flat No. 2: (6)—Box type baggage wagon, cookhouse; (7)—Cross cage; (8)—Cross cage; (9)—Cross cage; (10)—Cross cage; (11)—Box type baggage wagon, menagerie; and (12)—Steam calliope (Gentry twin).

Flat No. 3: (13)—Drop frame, painted clown head tableau wagon; (14)—Box type baggage wagon, poles, props, canvas; (15)—Diamond carving tableau wagon (ex Gollmar); (16)—Big top canvas wagon, ring curbs on side; and (17)—Gollmar 4 mirror bandwagon.

Flat No. 4: (18)—Box type baggage wagon, planks; (19)—Cross cage, dragon carvings; (20)—Sparks sea serpent tableau wagon; (21)—Small Oval Carvings tableau wagon (ex Gollmar); and (22)—No. 116, light plant.

Baggage wagons were painted red with white lettering. Tableau wagons and cages were a variety of colors. The 22 pieces of rolling stock breaks down into 9 baggage wagons, 5 tableaux, 1 steam calliope, 5 cross cages, 1 ticket wagon, and 1 light plant.

Wagons used in the daily street parade were as follows. The No. 1 bandwagon with the big show band atop was the former Gollmar Bros. 4 mirror. The Sparks Sea Serpent

tableau carried the sideshow band and the clown band rode the drop frame wagon with clown's head painted on the skyboard. The Small Oval tableau and the Diamond carving tableau also were in the parade and a small oriental band rode one of them. It will be mentioned near the end of this article that these wagons came into the hands of George W. Christy who painted them and put them into shape for show use. Although it is not certain but in all probability Christy painted them in the same colors they had when on Cole Bros. in 1930, Christy's colors were—Gollmar 4 mirror bandwagon, red with gold carvings; Sparks sea serpent, red with gold carvings; Small Oval tableau, blue; Diamond carving tableau, orange.

Also in the parade was the Gentry twin steam calliope which was painted red with gold carvings, and the five cages. Four of the cages were very plain in design but well painted and had the Cole Bros. title above the side panels. One cage had a large dragon carving on its sides.

The band and tableau wagons along with the cages, lead stock, and mounted people made a very creditable parade for a ten car circus.

The elephant herd consisted of Modoc, Queen, and Pinto. Other lead stock had one camel, 14 ponies, 10 head ring horses, and 35 head of baggage stock.

All canvas had been used the previous season. Big top was about a 90 with three 40 ft. middles. Other tents included menagerie, sideshow, pit show, cookhouse, dining, padroom, and concessions.

The performance was presented in two rings and a center stage.

Although there was a minimum amount of work done on the physical equipment during the winter of 1929-30

the show still presented a nice appearance on the lot. It may be recalled that the well worn and rather shoddy appearance the ten car show had in 1928 was completely remedied during the winter following that season and that a year ago, 1929, the Cole show was in excellent physical condition. The Douglas, Arizona photos show the wagons, train, etc. to be well painted and in top shape.

By late March Floyd King had his Cole Bros. Circus ready for the road. He had put together a competent staff, most of them people who had worked for him before and also a good performance. There was somewhat of a change for Floyd King personally this season. In the past he had spent most of his time in advance of the King owned circuses. This time, although doing some preliminary advance work and keeping in very close contact and constantly advising his general and contracting agents, he would remain back with the show as manager. Operating funds were so precariously low he needed to be on the scene to try and come up with enough money each day to at least pay the railroad for the move to the next stand.

The 1930 circus season was here. Railroad circuses going on the road included the following flat car type shows; Ringling-Barnum 90 cars; Sells-Floto, 40 cars; Hagenbeck-Wallace, 30 cars; Al G. Barnes, 30 cars; John Robinson, 25 cars; Sparks, 20 cars, all of these owned by John Ringling, then the independents included Robbins Bros. 30 cars (owned by Fred Buchanan); Christy Bros., 20 cars (owned by George W. Christy); Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Wild West, 30 cars (owned by Col. Zack Miller), and Cole Bros., 10 cars, owned by Floyd King. Also on the road was E.H. Jones' three car, gilly type show, Cole and Rogers Circus. Overland shows, most of them now completely motorized, included Downie Bros., Mighty Haag, Gentry Bros. (Sam B. Dill, owner), Schell Bros., Hunt's, Walter L. Main, Russell Bros., Barnett Bros., Seils-Sterling, M.L. Clark & Sons, La Mont Bros., Ketrow Bros., Orton Bros., Brison Bros., Cook Bros., Al F. Wheeler, Richards Bros., Conroy Bros., O'Neill Bros., Vanderburg Bros., Olinger, Harr Bros., Holly Bros., Henry Bros., Rose Killian, Robinson Bros., Coup Bros., Escalante Bros., Yankee Patterson, and Campbell Bros.

Rail shows parading included Robbins Bros., Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Wild West, Christy Bros., and Cole Bros. Most of the larger overland shows continued to present the grand free street parade.

Business conditions throughout the country had continued to worsen but still there was no real cause for alarm and as mentioned earlier most circus owners were fully expecting another

good season, as 1929 had been for the vast majority of shows.

An interesting item appeared in the March 8, 1930 *Billboard* in the column of Frank, Doc, Stuart titled Sawdust. The author told of recently visiting the quarters of the Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Wild West Show in Marland, Okla. and observing the rail cars on the siding getting a new coat of their light orange paint. Also sitting on the siding were five cars that had been used by Cole Bros. in 1929. The old Cole title was still visible. The author said the cars would later be painted in 101 colors and would be used by that show during the coming season. This is a most interesting notation. If the author is correct in his count then there would be four flats and the elephant car which Warren had repossessed from the 1929 Cole Bros. train. Probably there were only the four flat cars in Marland, all of which no doubt were used by the 101 Ranch Wild West in 1930. However, there is sufficient evidence, notably from the late Col. W.H. Woodcock, Sr., that the Warren built elephant car which had been on Cole in 1929 went to George W. Christy who used it in his 1930 Christy Bros. 20 car train. It would seem most likely that shortly after Warren took over their 5 cars (4 flats and 1 elephant) from the Cole quarters in Brenham, Texas they sold them immediately and shipped the flats to the 101 Ranch in Marland and the elephant car to Christy quarters in South Houston, Texas.

Floyd King was now ready to begin his sixth season as a railroad, flat car type, circus owner and his 10 car Cole Bros. Circus moved out of Brenham quarters to Uvalde, Texas where the 1930 season began on Saturday, March 29.

Next came a Sunday run to Eagle Pass where performances were given on Monday, March 31. The initial route called for a quick trip westward across Texas with other dates at Del Rio, Sanderson, Alpine, and Sierra Blanca and then into New Mexico at Las Cruces on April 5.

A *Billboard* reporter caught the show at Las Cruces and the following review appeared in the April 12, 1930 issue.

"COLE CIRCUS ON THE ROAD. Snappy program presented in two rings and on stage. Foreign features prevail. Las Cruces, N.M., April 5—The Cole Bros. Circus inaugurated its season last Saturday at Uvalde, Texas. After wintering in Brenham, Texas where the equipment was thoroughly overhauled and prepared for the road, the show train departed for its opening stand night of March 27. The final rehearsals were held in Uvalde.

"One of the bright features of the show is the street parade. Four bands of music and the steam calliope, under the direction of Harry Wills, lent plen-

THE GREAT COLE BROS. SHOWS

WORLD-TOURED



\$750,000 CAPITAL INVESTED 2-SPECIAL R. R. TRAINS-2
THE MOST AMAZING CIRCUS OF ALL TIMES!

500-PEOPLE-500 400-ANIMALS-400 5-BANDS-5 5,000-SEATS-5,000 20-AERIALISTS-20 80-ACROBATS-80 60-RIDERS-60 2-GREAT HERDS-2 2-OF ELEPHANTS-2	4 BOSTOCKS, ACROBATS POTTER FAMILY, EUROPEAN EQUESTRIANS THE RIDING GRANDELLS PRODIGIOUS HERNDON MONTANA SISTERS THE GREAT LARKIN
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WORLD'S WONDER TRAVELING ZOO

TIGERS LIONS LEOPARDS PANTHERS BOXS	LLAMAS OUADDS GNUS DEER NYLGHAS	BEARS WART HOGS VLAACK WARKS HARTREESTS ZEBUES	TAPIRS PECCARIES HEDGE HOGS JAGUARS MANDRILLS
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GALA, GOLDEN STREET PARADE AT 11 A. M.
DOORS OPEN 1 & 7 P. M. PERFORMANCES 2 & 8 P. M.

UVALDE, TEXAS, (Opening Stand, 1930.)

SATURDAY MARCH 29

Newspaper advertisement used by Cole Bros. 1930.

ty of harmony to the picturesque and colorful pageant. All of the parade wagons were fresh from the hands of the painters and decorators and elicited more than passing interest. The Oriental band was under the direction of Sig Arcaris.

"The performance is one of the snappiest and most pleasing ever given by a circus with two rings and one stage. Foreign features and novelties predominate throughout the program. In fact, but few American artists are in the program. Floyd King, the manager, is to be congratulated for assembling a performance of such genuine merit. Alex Lowande, equestrian director, was assisted by Jack Moore.

"The big show band, under the direction of Prof. W.E. Tyree, gave a 30 minute concert preceding the big show.

"The 1930 Cole Bros. Program was as follows:

"Display No. 1, Miss Hama, slack wire, Tetswari Duo, Risley performers; No. 2, Clown walkaround; No. 3, Pony Drills, Miss Rose and A.G. Lowande; No. 4, Swinging ladders, Misses Orman, West, and Bonta; No. 5, Tetswari Namba Troupe, head balancing and foot posturing, and Sakata in

foot slide; No. 6, Clown walkaround; No. 7, Bounding rope, A.G. Lowande; No. 8, Sengali Family, bicyclists; No. 9, Elephants, Miss Orman and William Hayes; No. 10, Bonta Trio, acrobats; No. 11, Perch acts, Tetswari, Miss West, and Harry Rooks; No. 12, Clown number by Arthur Borella Trio, Jack King, Art Lind, Phil King, Basil Williams, J.M. Azar, Tom Hayden, Bonta Trio and Tehar Trio; No. 13, Tight wire act, Jack Moore Trio; No. 14, Clown band, Arthur Borella, director; No. 15, Perez-Laflor Troupe; No. 16, Loop trapeze, Misses Darcy and Orman, and double trapeze, Williams and West; No. 17, Six Tehar Troupe, Arabian whirlwind acrobats; No. 18, Clown number; No. 19, Ironjaw, Misses Vanderburg, Perez, and Orman; No. 20, Menage, Misses West, Laflor and Hayes, and Harry Rooks; No. 21, Comedy acrobats, Tehar Trio and Bonta Trio; No. 22, Races, Jockey races, Jim Brown and Gilbert Shouch; Pony and monkey races; cowboy and girl, Jess and May Coppinger; chariots, Gilbert and Brown."

Although there was no mention of an aftershow, in all probability there was one in keeping with the Floyd King tradition as well as most circuses in those days. No doubt it was as usual wild west oriented and headed by Jess and May Coppinger.

After Las Cruces additional New Mexico stands came at Lordsburg, Silver City, and Deming, then the show moved still westward into Arizona with first date in that state coming at Clifton on April 9. The next day the show was at Safford then played Douglas on April 11 where the late Charles Puck, caught and photographed the show. Puck, who sent me this set of photos many years ago, said he was most fortunate to have caught Cole Bros. at Douglas. He said he was driving across Arizona headed to Texas and noted the show would be playing there on April 11. He delayed his journey long enough to watch the unloading, street parade, and later the performance that day. The latter day fans and historians are indeed thankful that Mr. Puck did so and took this great set of photos. So far these are the only significant photos we have of the 1930 Cole show.

After Douglas Cole Bros. continued to Arizona with dates at Bisbee, Nogales, Tucson, Ray, Mesa, Phoenix, Aja, and Yuma. Possibly there were more stands in the state. The last known stand was Yuma played on April 19 then the route is "lost" until the show was in California at Santa Paula on April 24.

Cole Bros. very shortly after its opening ran into opposition with the Schell Bros. Circus, a fairly large motorized circus owned by George Engressor. The two shows battled over towns in New Mexico and Arizona

when Cole was headed westward and Schell eastward after wintering in southern California. The April 5, 1930 *Billboard* told of this in an article with headlines, "OPPOSITION IN THE WEST. Schell and Cole Circuses Playing Same Towns in Arizona and New Mexico."

"Probably the first opposition fight reported for the season with circuses is between Schell Bros. going east from the Coast in the states of Arizona and New Mexico and Cole Bros. going west. The Schell show is in Safford, Ariz., Mar 31, Clifton, April 1, Silver City, N.M., April 2, Lordsburg, 3rd, and Demming, 5th. The Cole show is in Lordsburg, April 6, Silver City, 6th, Demming, 7th, Clifton, 8th, and Safford, 9th. The former show is in first."

Other than the opening review there was little appearing in the *Billboard* concerning the first few weeks of the Cole Bros. season. Charles Wirth writing in his column, Sawdust and Spangles in the April 19, 1930 issue did have this interesting comment concerning the present status of the King brothers.



"A few years ago the King brothers, Floyd and Howard, started as circus operators in a small way and went steadily along until they had two good sized shows on the road, the Gentry Bros. Circus and one under the title of the Walter L. Main Circus. Last year they had out the Gentry and Cole Bros. circuses. It appeared that the boys were going to continue to go forward and be up among the leaders, but they suffered a set-back last season when they lost the Gentry show. This year there is but one King show on the road, the Cole Bros. Circus, and King friends and boosters are in hopes that the show will come through with flying colors and that the name of King soon again will be one to be reckoned with in circus circles."

The portion of "lost" route as mentioned earlier consists of four possible playing days between Yuma, Arizona, April 19 and Santa Paula, Calif., April 24, a relative short distance northeast of Los Angeles. Then the route follows

the coast going north with show playing Ventura, Santa Barbara, Santa Maria, San Luis Obispo, Pasa Robles, and Salinas where the show exhibited on April 30. May 1 found Cole Bros. at Watsonville followed by Hollister and it was in the Bay Area at Richmond on May 3. A break then occurs in the available route and next information we have on the show it is at Oroville on May 7 which was followed by Marysville, Woodland, Colusa, and Willows. No stands have been located for May 12 and 13 but on the 14th the show was at Dunsmuir, the final date in California before moving into Oregon at Ashland the next day.

Floyd King in his interview said that from the beginning of the 1930 season the show was getting enough money to pay its operating expenses and all personnel payrolls were made on time until the fourth of July.

Practically nothing appeared in the *Billboard* about Cole after the show entered California. The May 3, 1930 issue did have a short note that Jake Besser, boss butcher with Cole Bros., reports good business for the show

cisco Bay area a couple of weeks then moved on northward and went into Oregon a few days after Cole Bros. During the next few weeks which saw both Cole and Barnes in Oregon and later Washington the larger show "waited" and blasted Cole at every opportunity. A review of both shows' routes in the area reveal they did not actually play the same towns but Barnes would sent its opposition billers into the Cole towns and the newspapers would carry "wait" ads. In those days major railroad shows such as Barnes would bill outlying towns for a radius of 50 miles or more of the town they would actually play in an attempt to drain off the local's circus money by encouraging them to make the trip to the exhibition city and pass up any show that might happen to be playing in their hometown. This is what Barnes did to Cole in the Pacific northwest and no doubt it hurt considerably although the smaller show continued to draw well enough to pay its obligations on time.

After Cole's initial Oregon date at Ashland the show then played Grants Pass, Cottage Grove, Albany, Dallas, McMinnville, Tilamook, Hillsboro, The Dalles, Hood River, Astoria, and St. Helens.

On May 18 the show moved into Washington at Kelso, then played Raymond, Chehalis, Aberdeen, Shelton, Olympia, Roslyn, Ellensburg, Sunnyside, and Pasco. Leaving the state Cole returned to Oregon for additional stands at Pendleton, LaGrande, and Baker, and moving ever eastward went into Idaho at Weiser on June 11.

At the request of the author, CHS Michael D. Sporrer of Bellevue, Washington did considerable research in the newspaper files of some of the towns Cole Bros. played in the Pacific Northwest in 1930. As a result we have some most interesting information concerning the show's tour of Oregon and Washington to record in this article. Sporrer found that Cole Bros. advertised considerably using a variety of cuts and succeeded in having much of its press book material published in the local papers. Photo illustrations in the press material were primarily shots from Ringling-Barnum, Sells-Floto and other large shows. Sporrer furnished us many photostats of the Cole newspaper advertisements but unfortunately most were not of adequate quality to reproduce here.

Some of the press stories mentioned acts which had not been on the show in several seasons such as the Cottrell-Powell riding act, Bessie Hollis, the Rebras, and others. Names of clowns no longer with the King ten car show were mentioned, and evidently none of the press stories of a year ago had been revised as the show still named Prof. Benjamin Fowler as being the band

Photo No. 6—Cole Bros. sideshow bandwagon (Sparks sea serpent) with four horse hitch in street parade at Douglas, Arizona, April 11, 1930. Photo by Charles Puck.

since it opened on March 29. Another note said that O.C. Cox and William (Sailor) Sanderson who had the novelty concessions on Cole Bros. were visitors at the *Billboard* offices in San Francisco when the show was playing nearby Richmond.

All the time Cole Bros. was in California it avoided the Al G. Barnes Circus and stayed away from its dates. The large and powerful 30 car Barnes show was a powerhouse in California especially in the spring. Barnes wintered in Baldwin Park, Calif., and opened its 1930 season March 23 in that city. After several weeks in the southern part of the state playing the principal cities including nine days in Los Angeles the Barnes show moved up the coast and was in the San Fran-



Photo No. 7—Cole Bros. three elephants, Modoc, Pinto, Queen, followed by a camel and the steam calliope bring up the rear of the street parade at Douglas, Arizona, April 11, 1930. Photo by Charles Puck.

director. Several acts listed were complete fabrications, such as sisters from Belgium, others from Paris, the Royal Circus of Amsterdam etc. One press story which Floyd King used over a period of many years was the famous "The Circus Woman is Industrious". Most of the papers Sporrer researched in the Pacific Northwest carried this one. Slight revisions of the same story would still be used in Floyd King's motorized King Bros. Circus in the 1950's.

The street parade, becoming sort of a rarity on a railroad show, got a big play however the folks at Ashland, Oregon were disappointed on May 15 when a late arrival of the train made it necessary to cancel the march. The following article ran in the afternoon edition of the local Ashland newspaper.

"WHITE TOP HERE TODAY. Parade Called Off When Circus Train Arrives Here Late. Whistle of calliope and the distinctive rumble of circus wagon wheels through Ashland streets today heralded the coming here again of the 'white tops'.

"Cole Brothers circus, the first to visit Ashland in several years arrived this morning over the Southern Pacific for two performances on the Avenue showgrounds opposite Normal School.

"Late arrival of the circus train, circus officials said, compelled cancellation of the street parade. Every effort was made to move equipment from the unloading point to the grounds. It was decided at noon, however, to forego the 'march'.

"All equipment and tents had reached the grounds at noon and a canvas city was erected in time for the afternoon show.

"More than 50 percent of the pupils enrolled at the junior high and Lincoln schools were absent this afternoon—circus day. School work ended shortly after 2 o'clock this afternoon.

"Approximately that number were out of the Washington school, while the high school pupils disdained to play hookey for so ordinary a thing as the

circus—they'll probably visit the 'white tops' tonight.

"Announcement was made in school yesterday that those who wanted to attend the circus might do so—providing they brought written excuses from their parents."

The Ashland paper also mentioned a noon day steam calliope concert on the lot which possibly was a regular occurrence or perhaps it was given only on those days in which the parade was cancelled. It was also customary in those days for shows that had steam calliopes to present a short concert about dusk. The Ashland article continued as follows.

"One feature of the noon-day activities was a concert on the old fashioned steam calliope, one of the few of its kind in existence. It was played by a Pacific Coast man, Harry Wills, Huntington Park, California. Among selections was one, 'Springtime In The Rockies', appropriate for the first fair day locally in some time.

"Featured on the Cole program are a number of foreign acts, headed by the Tetsuwari troupe of Japanese aerialists, and the Tahar group of Arabian acrobats. Variety and vaudeville acts predominate but the program retains all traditional sawdust ring numbers, including pony drills, menage acts, leaping dogs, elephant act and hippodrome races.

"Doors for the night performance will open at seven o'clock and the main performance will start one hour later."

The St. Helens, Oregon *Sentinel* had an article explaining the promotional deal it had for the Cole Bros. date in that city on May 27. Each boy or girl who gets a new subscription for the *Sentinel* will be given a ticket to the circus. All the kids had to do was to get their parents, neighbor, or friends to purchase a year's subscription to the

paper and they would get their circus ticket. The show also worked this promotion in Ashland and probably in any and all towns in which the deal with the local newspaper could be set.

Several towns had reviews of the Cole show, one of the best appearing in the local Grant's Pass, Oregon paper following its stand on May 16. It read as follows.

"COLE BROTHERS CIRCUS PLAYS TO PLEASED CROWD IN GRANT'S PASS. By Louise Stokes.

"Cole Brothers Circus came to town Friday and there was no school.

"It paraded at noon and there was no hot lunches awaiting tired businessmen in their homes.

"It left town at midnight after giving two performances and there is no report of boys leaving home to be clowns.

"All of which revives in the memory of many that it has been 12 years since a circus hit Grant's Pass.

"The Japanese acts were packed with interest. One small Japanese with legs slim and graceful as a young girl balanced a cylinder that looked like the lid of a huge hat box on his feet, while a girl sat on top of it. Another Japanese balanced herself on a box on a wire. Two young men lay on their backs and wiggled their toes at each other as they juggled a barrel on their feet. One young Japanese, whose infectious grin was as broad as his face, calls himself Kamitetsuwari. He bounced up a flight of steps standing on his head.

"The crowd held its breath as the biggest elephant in the circus balanced its tons of bulk over his trainer, prone on the ground, and lay down on him, the elephant's 'elbows' forming a hollow that allowed just enough space for the man's body.

"In the opinion of many people there is no thrill quite like seeing a spirited horse prance in time to music. This circus has three horses who do that very well. They spurn the earth with a gentle push as though they did not care for it at all. After the horse dancing act, the big elephant did the varsity drag and shook the tent.

"The Tehar troupe boasted something new. A man turned cartwheels around the arena with one hand, and shot off a pistol with the other hand. A boy who appeared to be no more than 13 years of age, turned handsprings so fast that his red sash and bandana were red streaks in the air.

"Cecil Barrick, a local wrestler, accepted the challenge from Nick Londos, lighthweight champion of several states, and in a match that barred nothing but the strangle hold held the champion down the required three seconds and Londos refused to shake hands with Barrick when the match was over.

"The clowns were funny, the animals well-trained, the acrobatic troupes un-

usual and the entire audience went home satisfied with one exception.

"The mayor of a nearby town was heard to complain rebelliously: 'I'm sure ash... disappointed. This blankety blank show hasn't got a single blonde or even a red head'."

Several days before the Cole Bros. stand in Grant's Pass there appeared in the newspaper column adjacent to the one with a Cole press story a notice that the Al G. Barnes Circus would be playing Medford, Oregon on May 19, three days after Cole's date. The article advised that the Barnes show was the world's largest wild animal circus and that colorful lithographs describing the wonders of it could be spotted throughout the local area. Naturally Al G. Barnes ran "wait" ads in the Grant's Pass papers.

One of the most unusual newspaper items picked up by Mike Sporrer was in the Shelton, Washington paper. Immediately at the top of a regular Cole press story advertising its stand in that city scheduled for June 1 was a two photo cut with top heading "Circus Uses Modern Trucks" and caption telling how the circus now on the road after wintering in California uses Chevrolet trucks to move its equipment. One photo shows an elephant beside a Chevy sedan while the other shot pictures a cage truck pulling a rather crudely built trailer with an elephant riding in same. How this cut, obviously advertising some motorized show, gets tagged onto a Cole press story stressing the fact it is a large railroad show with "600 people" which would exhibit on the lot adjacent to the Northern Pacific depot is a puzzler. In all probability the cut was one sent by a motorized show, possibly Henry Bros. which often played that territory and somehow the editor got it and the Cole press story mixed together. In any event the result is unusual.

Cole Bros. had a bit of bad pre show publicity in the Dallas, Oregon paper prior to its stand on May 19. The article was as follows.

"CIRCUS IN DIFFICULTY OVER LICENSE. The Cole Brothers Circus, billed to show in Dallas on Monday, May 19, will have some difficulty over a city license for their performance here. The advance agent for the show last week appeared before City Auditor Ford and City Attorney Hayter, maintaining that the show was a dog and pony show and not a circus and upon that presentation secured a \$15.00 license.

"Later the advertising appeared throughout the city billing it as a circus. City officials took the matter up and Mr. Harter telegraphed the circus that their license has been cancelled because of misrepresentation and that it would have to pay the circus license of \$100.00 to show here.

"Reports from California where the



Photo No. 8—Steam calliope (Gentry twin) with four horse hitch in Cole Bros. Street parade at Douglas, Arizona, April 11, 1930. Photo by Charles Puck.

same circus has been showing have also put local authorities on their guard. A Santa Barbara, California paper panned the outfit mercilessly stating that it had advertised a street parade and had never even applied for a permit to hold one, that obscene pictures had been sold to children and minors at sideshows and that other irregular practices had been followed. These reports have put both city and county officials on guard and an attempt will be made to see that everything is conducted in a regular manner."

The show adjusted its difficulties with the Dallas authorities and played the stand as planned. The following article later told of the show's visit.

"CIRCUS STRIKES BAD WEATHER HERE. The Cole Brothers Circus which was billed to play Dallas Monday struck all kinds of bad luck on that day in the shape of heavy rains which continued during the morning and a good part of the afternoon.

"The afternoon performance was given before a very small crowd but there was a better turnout for the evening.

"The circus, while not large, put on a very creditable exhibition. Its three trained elephants were very good. A group of Japanese acrobats were featured in juggling stunts and an Arabian group in acrobatic stunts.

"Old Sampson, the mammoth elephant, which J.T. Huntley mentioned having seen 42 years ago when this circus last toured the Willamette Valley is no longer with the company. Representatives of the circus stated they had run across other memories of Sampson, one of which includes the wrecking of a small Idaho town some 40 years ago when he ran amuck there. They know nothing of his whereabouts. A representative looked up Mr. Huntley and had an interesting visit with him.

"The bad weather, which visited the

company here, appears to be following them elsewhere through the valley. The difficulty over the license was adjusted satisfactorily with city authorities. There was no complaint of the sale of obscene pictures, as local authorities were vigilant."

An interesting note was found in the Olympia, Washington paper concerning the forecoming visit of Cole Bros. to that city on June 2. At the regular meeting of the city council a delegation from the local Chamber of Commerce appeared and requested that the city prohibit undesirable features such as shell games at the circus which would appear in Olympia on June 2. The mayor and commissioner of public safety quickly assured the delegation that the police would not tolerate such practices at the show. The entire matter came up because several citizens had been "taken" in a shell game worked at an unnamed circus in Olympia a year ago.

Weiser, the first stand in Idaho, was followed by additional dates in the state at Nampa, Mountain Home, Boise, Shoshone, Twin Falls, American Falls and Pocatello. On June 19 the show went into Utah at Ogden, then played Salt Lake City, Provo, and Price. In the meantime Al G. Barnes which had caused so much trouble in Oregon and Washington was now far away. That show had gone eastward across the northern part of Idaho to Montana and then into Canada for a lengthy stay in the Dominion. Cole Bros. was now relatively free from opposition.

Cole moved on eastward into Colorado and was at Grand Junction on June 23, then played Montrose the following day. No date has been located for June 24 but on the 25 the show was in Delta, Colorado.

For weeks little concerning Cole Bros. appeared in the trade publications. At times the route would be carried but after the stand in Delta even that became silent in the pages of the *Billboard*. One of the very few notes concerning the show appeared in the May 31, 1930 issue in the Under the Marquee column by Circus Solly. It



Photo No. 9—Cole Bros. on the lot, season of 1930. In foreground are the midway stands, marquee, with menagerie and big tops in rear. Portion of the ticket wagon can be seen just to left of the marquee. On right is the main sideshow with pit show on left. Circus World Museum (Baraboo, Wis.) Photo.

said that F.J. Frink was rather secretive about the reason for his presence in Chicago last week but according to reports he was arranging to join the Cole Bros. Circus in Oregon to look after the interests of the National Printing Co. in that outfit. The following week the same column said that Frink and National Printing Company apparently didn't get together on the reported Cole Bros. job as Frink has left for the east and advised friends he was going with the 101 Ranch Wild West Show. From these two reports it can be assumed that National Printing Company had some concern over the rather sizeable account Cole Bros. was running up and in all probability very little, if any, had been paid on it.

It was mentioned in the "With the Circus Fans" section of the June 19, 1930 *Billboard* that Lorabel Richardson of Marshalltown, Iowa, a member of CFA, had written from Pueblo, Colo. that she had spent a wonderful day there on the Cole Bros. Circus. She said she was cordially received by Floyd King, manager of the show, and she partook of a splendid dinner in the cookhouse, the steward, Walsh, being a genial host. She stated the show's performance was very good.

Cole's stand at Pueblo is the last date in that state which has turned up but in all probability several others were played. The route now becomes completely "lost" except that according to King in his interview it moved east through Nebraska and on to Iowa and later Missouri.

It was now July 1930. It was hot, one of the hottest summers on record in much of the nation. Especially was it torrid in the great plains states which Cole Bros. was now preparing to traverse. It was farm country and it was in the summer of 1930 that the nation's farmers took their first and worst beating from the great depression. First hit by the depression was the stock market, the speculators, and the financial institutions. Next came industry which soon after the stock market crash in October '29 began seeing a gradual slowdown. It didn't

pick up as expected in the spring of 1930 but kept sliding ever downward. First there was a reduction in the number of hours worked, then came layoffs, and in some instances, complete plant shutdowns. The farmers got theirs beginning in July 1930. Prices dropped and the heat and drought damaged severely the crops already planted and soon the midwest populace was out of money—it all started happening about the time Cole Bros. was moving eastward in July 1930.

Cole Bros. had been moving along alright since the season started but now funds in the grouchbag had dwindled to barely enough to pay the railroad for the move to the next stand. Although no payrolls had been missed until July 4, the show was not able to pay its people after that. According to Floyd King in his interview he got everyone together and explained his plight, advising they had two choices. Either the show would fold then and there and no one would get paid, or it could keep going and hopefully things would improve to the extent the payroll could be made again. The personnel would at least continue to get three squares in the cookhouse. That was all that could be promised. According to King everyone, to the man, decided to stick with him, staff, performers, and workmen alike. As long as enough money could be realized to meet minimum operating expenses including paying the railroad the show would continue on its route.

On July 7 at Greeley, Colorado the first major casualty of the 1930 circus season occurred when Christy Bros. Circus folded and returned to its South Houston, Texas quarters. Christy Bros. had begun the season on 20 cars

but after a very short time on the road found the going rough so it was cut down to only 10 cars. Even with the reduced operating nut the show couldn't make it and had to close. Although the show's owner, George W. Christy, remained in some sort of circus business for the next 15 years his large railroad show never again went on the road.

Next major outfit to fold in 1930 was the Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Wild West Show which had to call it quits on August 3 at Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin. Although a smaller Ranch show did go out in 1931 it was unable to complete that season and became another major depression casualty.

Fred Buchanan's large 30 car Robbins Bros. Circus began feeling the depression pinch in the summer of 1930 so it sent 10 cars of equipment back to its Granger, Iowa quarters and continued on the road with the reduced show. Even so, tradition has long held that the Robbins Bros. show was able to finish out a reasonably full season and make it home to quarters only through financing by William P. Hall.

John Ringling's Circus empire of 6 railroad shows was not immune to the economic setbacks which began in the summer of 1930. Especially hard hit were Hagenbeck-Wallace, John Robinson, and Al G. Barnes. Sparks, always a sure winner in the east, wasn't setting any records. Only Sells-Floto with its tremendous Tom Mix attraction and Ringling-Barnum seemed to be going along fairly well but even with these, business was considered below normal.

A single item appeared in the *Billboard* during the entire month of July concerning Cole Bros. In the July 26, 1930 issue it was reported that Cole Bros. was moving along and doing nicely and that the railroad cars had a new coat of red and yellow paint.

So far the only known date and stands for Cole Bros. in July were Independence, Iowa, July 18 and Festus, Mo., July 28. Sometime after Christy Bros. closed, Fletcher Smith, who had been with that show joined Cole Bros. where he initially was on

the front door and handled press duties back on the show. Later it was reported in the *Billboard* he was playing the steam calliope, evidently replacing Harry Wills, and was making announcements in the big top.

On August 4 Cole had moved further eastward and was in Illinois at Cairo. The following item appeared in the *Billboard*. "A visitor to Cole Bros. Circus at Cairo, Ill., August 4 reports the show presents a very nice appearance after being in the 'desert' practically the entire season and the stock is in first class shape. The show in the afternoon played to about a half house and at night to a full house. Concert had fair business. Menagerie makes a fine showing with 5 cage wagons, 3 bulls, and 1 camel. The show is transported on 10 cars." If a correct picture of the business done in Cairo was given then that stand was one of the best in some time. The following day, August 5, the show moved into Kentucky and played Paducah. It evidently remained in the state for the next several days but we don't know what towns it played. Next known date was at Scottsville on August 11 which proved to be the final one not only for Cole Bros. but a Floyd King owned railroad circus.

What happened in Scottsville, Ky., August 11, 1930 was simple. Floyd King just ran out of money, couldn't borrow any from any source, and when he was unable to pay the railroad for moving the show to its next scheduled stand at Bowling Green, Ky. Cole Bros. was finished. The show had also been billed to play Glasgow, Ky. on August 14. Thus was the equipment of the 10 car circus delivered into the hands of the mortgage holder, National Printing and Lithographing Co.

The August 23, 1930 *Billboard* told the story of the finish of the Cole show in an article very sympathetic to its owner. It read as follows.

"COLE BROS. CIRCUS CLOSES SEASON AT SCOTTSVILLE, KY.—Final Performance of 10 Car Organization Given August 11. Continued Business Depression, Severe Drought and Heat Hastens End. Probable That Show Will Be Sold.

"Scottsville, Ky. August 16—Cole Bros. Circus, a 10 car show, closed its season here Monday night, two months and a half before schedule time. The continued business depression, the severe drought, and six weeks of scorching, searing weather, in which the temperature seldom dropped below 100 degrees, hastened the close. Preparations are being made to ship the equipment to winter quarters. It is probable that the circus will be sold as a whole or piece-meal.

"With the passing of the Cole Bros. Circus, the crown of Floyd King as a circus owner slipped from his head, and leaves but two owners of big

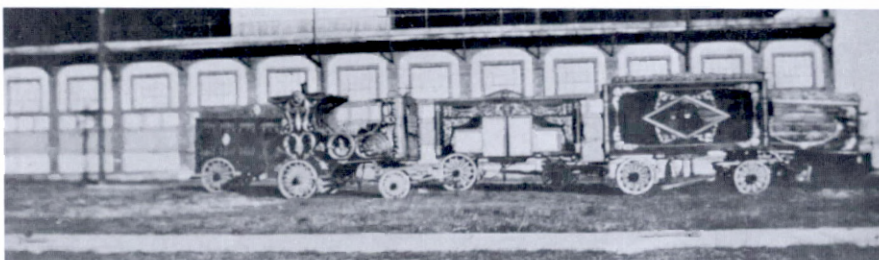


Photo No. 10—Ingraham and Rutherford Circus Sideshow at the fair in Aurora, Illinois, August 29, 1930. The owners planned to frame a new railroad circus during the winter to go out in

railroad circuses in the field—John Ringling and Fred Buchanan. For 20 years King has been an important factor in the realm of the white tops, first as a press agent with the Al G. Barnes Circus in 1912, and the following six years as general press representative of the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus. Entering the field as an owner in 1919, the show grew from a small two-car circus, until 1926 when the King brothers, Floyd and Howard, owned, with no indebtedness, the Gentry Bros. Circus, operating on 10 cars, and the Walter L. Main Circus, traveling on 15 cars.

"Last fall the Gentry Bros. Circus closed under a financial strain, and the continued efforts of the Cole Bros. Circus to keep the former organization going, continually drained its financial resources, from which the show was never fully able to recover in the face of adverse conditions. The heroic efforts of the owner, and a staff of

Photo No. 11—Tableau wagons of the Cole Bros. Circus parked on the fairgrounds at Peoria, Illinois in the fall of 1930 where they had been shipped for the planned Ingraham and Rutherford Circus. From left to right are pictured the clown bandwagon (drop frame), Gentry twin steam calliope, Gollmar four mirror bandwagon, Gollmar Diamond carving tableau, and Gollmar small oval tableau. Joe Bradbury Collection.



1931. Equipment of this sideshow plus the 10 car Cole Bros. Circus which they purchased was to go into their new show but it never came into being. Joe Bradbury Collection.

bosses, many of whom Floyd King had with him since the first year he started a circus, kept the organization going by an almost unparalleled feat in the long history of the sawdust arena.

"Opening at Uvalde, Texas, March 29, with a bankroll scarcely large enough to make change, the Cole Bros. Circus headed for the Pacific Coast and the Northwest. Scarcely once a week would the circus have even a fair day's business. Yet not a payday was missed the first 12 weeks of the season, until the tropical heat descended on the show the middle of July. It was then that the performers were acquainted with the real conditions. It was explained that to continue the battle might mean a loss and absence of pay days until better days came. Almost to a man the entire personnel elected to stay and take their chances. They gambled with the owner and lost, but took it good-naturedly with the troupers' laconic remark, 'Next season it will be better.'

"Through their old territory the business of the Cole Bros. Circus day after day was from one-fifth to one-sixth less than in former seasons. In spite of the business depression the hardest blow was the continued heat, with about 20 degrees above normal, which cut the existing business to about one-half. When the close came here there was not an attachment.

Simply a case of an exhaustion of financial capital.

"All of the employees spoke in the highest praise of Floyd King, and sympathizes with him in his loss."

Floyd King in his interview told the story of the final season for his 10 car show like this, "1930, that was the first full year of the depression. That winter Cole Bros. wintered in Brenham, Texas. We opened in March at Uvalde, Texas. We went on down through the southern route across Texas, New Mexico and to Arizona and California and right on up the coast to the Canadian border. Then we went down on the Oregon Shortline Railroad through Idaho, Utah, Colorado, and into Nebraska, Missouri, and Kentucky. We closed in Scottsville, Ky. in August, right in the heart of the depression. Previously when we showed Scottsville, a year or two before, we did a gross business of \$3500. At Scottsville in 1930 I think the show took in about 4 or 5 hundred dollars. In fact that was about what the show was getting during the months of July and August. In fact, after July 4, we never did have a payday with the circus, however, nowhere else, I believe, will you find a more loyal bunch of troupers than with our circus. The last 6 weeks the show was out no one got any salary and everybody put their shoulders to the wheel trying to make a go of it. However, it seems nobody had the money to buy a big show ticket. Thomas Hanks, the owner of the National Printing Company in Chicago went along with us in great shape in the operation of the show with the supply of paper and dates etc., so when we found out the show couldn't move out of Scottsville, Ky. there was no complaint on the part of Hanks. However, he was entitled to the equipment we owned so I made him a 'present' of the Cole Bros. Circus. The equipment was shipped to Nashville,

Photo No. 13—Cage used by Cole Bros. in 1930 at the G.W. Christy quarters in South Houston, Texas. In rear is a former Christy Bros. Circus coach. This photo probably taken in the early 1940's. Fred D. Pfening, Jr. Collection.



Tenn., then to Peoria, Illinois and it finally ended up at Venice, Illinois on the tracks of the Venice Transportation Company. George W. Christy several years later bought the wagons and cars and they were shipped to him at South Houston, Texas."

As King mentioned, the equipment, taken over by National Printing Co., was later moved to Nashville, Tenn. The August 30, 1930 *Billboard* told about this as follows.

"**COLE SHOW IN NASHVILLE WHERE IT WILL BE SOLD.** Nashville, Tenn., Aug. 23—The Cole Bros. Circus, which closed at Scottsville, Ky., August 11, was brought here last Saturday night and will be sold. It is being looked after by David F. Masten. W.W. Mayberry, an official of the National Printing and Engraving Company of Chicago, a creditor of the circus, has been here.

"The cars are on a siding near the Cumberland River in East Nashville at the end of South Fifth Street. Through arrangements made with B.L. Calhoun, proprietor of a barbecue stand at Hillsboro and Jones Roads, the animals, tents and other property are on the farm adjoining Calhoun's stand. Performances, although not as complete as when the show was en tour, were given yesterday and today."

The Cole Bros. show had been advertised for sale in the previous issue of *Billboard*. The ad reads as follows. "10 CAR CIRCUS FOR SALE., 7 tabloid wagons, 5 cages of animals, 3 elephants, 1 camel, 35 head of baggage stock, 10 head ring stock, 14 ponies. Complete 10 car show, ready to go on road. Property of Cole Bros. Circus. Address all mail to Manager, Cole Bros. Circus, Nashville, Tenn."

While the show was still in Nashville a note in the *Billboard* said that Tod Hartmount, Uncle Tom show owner and manager and his partner, C.W. Shortle, Jr., had aided the folks of the Cole Bros. Circus. They have a large soft drink bottling plant in Nashville and had helped the show stage several performances in which it was said that \$1,000 was realized which was a great benefit to all the stranded show personnel.

In the meantime the for sale advertisement had borne fruit and two buyers had come forward. The Sept. 6, 1930 *Billboard* told about it like this.

"**INGRAHAM AND RUTHERFORD BUY COLE BROS. CIRCUS.** Planning to Organize 30 Car Show to take the road in 1931. Fairgrounds at Peoria, Ill. Obtained for Winter Quarters. Will Inject New Ideas.

"Chicago, Aug. 30, H.C. Ingraham of Peoria and Bert Rutherford of Houston, Texas, announced this week that they have purchased the Cole Bros. Circus which recently closed at Scottsville, Ky. and with animals and equipment which they have been quietly acquiring they plan to organize a 30 car show to take the road next spring. The Cole show was purchased from Thomas Hanks, who held a mortgage on it.

"Ingraham and Rutherford are at Aurora, Ill. this week, where they have charge of the independent shows at the Central States Fair. As soon as the fair closes September 5 they will move the circus paraphernalia which they have at the fair to Peoria. The equipment of the Cole Bros. show which is now at Nashville, Tenn., also will be taken to Peoria. The fairgrounds in that city have been obtained as winter quarters. There are ample buildings available, admirably suited to the purpose for which they will be used. The show will be framed during the winter, wagons will be built and gold-leaved, animals trained and all preparations made to take out a first-class outfit. Contracts are now being made for special paper.

"Ingraham and Rutherford state that they intend to inject many new ideas into their show—new at least to the present generation. They will bring back the leapers and various other stunts popular with the circuses of years ago, and will offer a parade. The show's staff will be composed of thoroughly experienced men.

"The time is ripe for something of

Photo No. 14—Cole Bros. 1930 cage at the G.W. Christy quarters in South Houston, Texas in early 1940's. In rear is portion of a former Christy Bros. Circus coach. Fred D. Pfening, Jr. Collection.





this sort," says Rutherford, "and we believe we can successfully put it over."

H.C. "Doc" Ingraham had been engaged in various kinds of show business for a number of years and Bert Rutherford had served as general agent for Christy Bros. Circus for several seasons. Both were capable showmen and in normal business times could probably have made a go of their proposed new circus. At the time of their purchase of the Cole Bros. property they were operating a circus type sideshow, complete with large colorful and titled entrance banner, at various fairs in the mid-west. (See photo no. 10.) The duo's optimism certainly was not based on the cold facts of the current circus situation in the country. On September 1 the large 30 car Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus closed for the season at Freeport, Illinois and on September 5 the 25 car John Robinson Circus called it quits. Both returned to their quarters in Peru, Indiana, it being fully 6 to 8 weeks ahead of normal closing time. Before the end of September both Sells-Floto and Sparks, other railroad shows, would be in the barn. It certainly didn't look bright for Ingraham and Rutherford.

The Cole Bros. train arrived in Peoria, Ill. on September 16 and the Sept. 20, 1930 *Billboard* said that work started at the quarters of the new Ingraham and Rutherford Circus. However, the trade publications soon became silent about the new show, always a sure sign that something had gone wrong.

Nothing further was mentioned about the show until the Nov. 8, 1930 *Billboard* advised that Ingraham and Rutherford had run into more or less grief in connection with some of the show property purchased and to date it had cost them \$1,300 or more to settle judgments against it. Just what financial arrangements were made to purchase the Cole property from National Printing Co. or details on the difficulties of the other claims are not known to the author. In all probability the duo just weren't able to come up with enough funds to make an adequate down payment on the property. In any event by mid November all of the Cole properties were completely in the hands of National.

Photo No. 12—The five cages used by Cole Bros. in 1930 are shown here parked on the fairgrounds at Peoria, Illinois where they had been shipped for the Ingraham and Rutherford Circus. At left is an unidentified baggage wagon. This shot was taken in the fall of 1930. Joe Bradbury Collection.

The Nov. 22, 1930 *Billboard* said that Austin King was now in charge of the defunct Ingraham and Rutherford Circus at the fairgrounds in Peoria, the property having reverted to the National Printing Company. The animals purchased for the show are being exhibited at a downtown location with an admission fee being charged. The article concluded by noting that P.N. Branson, formerly of the Robbins Bros. Circus, but now with Downie Bros., was a visitor recently looking over the elephants with a view to purchasing them for Downie, but left without buying.

However, Charles Sparks, owner of Downie Bros. was still interested in a couple of the elephants and a few days later purchased Queen and Pinto. They were shipped from Peoria, Ill. by express with Dave Masten in charge to Savannah, Georgia where Downie was playing November 20-21. Jess Adkins purchased the best of the elephants, Modoc, and later sold her to Ringling-Barnum. No mention was made in the trade publications concerning the sale of any other animals but it is assumed National sold the remainder of the menagerie as well as the ring stock, baggage stock, and ponies.

Just how long the physical equipment remained at the Peoria fairgrounds is not known to the author but later (probably during the final weeks of 1930 or early 1931) the train, wagons, and properties were sent to the Venice Transportation Company yards in East St. Louis, Illinois. Again, the arrangements between Venice and National are not known. In all probability Venice still held title to the flat cars and one stock and a deal was made for the firm to take over all of the rail equipment as well as the wagons and other equipment. In any event the 10 car Cole Bros. show ended up at the Venice plant where it remained until the spring of 1936.

In the meantime Floyd King, down

and out personally, needed a job so he went to work in early October with Sam B. Dill's motorized Gentry Bros. Circus which had been framed during the early months of 1930 at the old West Baden, Indiana quarters, coincidentally the site where the physical equipment of Floyd and Howard King's 15 car Gentry Bros. Circus of 1929 ended up. It is assumed Floyd King handled advance or press work for Dill for the remaining weeks of the 1930 season. The Nov. 1, 1930 *Billboard* contained this item.

"Floyd King can't be kept out of circus business, now he is with Sam B. Dill's Gentry Bros. Circus."

Although the 1930 season saw the end of a King owned railroad circus the two brothers were far from finished in the circus picture. Floyd went to work for John Ringling's Al G. Barnes, 30 car circus, in 1931 in the press and publicity department where he remained through most of the 1934 season. In 1934 Howard King returned briefly as a circus owner and had a motorized show titled Rice Bros. on the road but it lasted only one season. Floyd said in the interview that he was not connected with the 1934 Rice Bros. Circus in any way. In late season 1934 Floyd was transferred to the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus. He decided to go with Jess Adkins and Zack Terrell and their new Cole Bros. Circus in 1935. In fact, Floyd says he was the one who convinced messers Adkins and Terrell to use the Cole Bros. title. An interesting development in 1935 was that the show got some billing paper from National Printing Co. which included designs which had been used on the 1930 version of Cole Bros. Floyd King served as general agent for Adkins and Terrell owned circuses through the 1939 season then framed and operated for the next few years a number of wild life shows.

In the meantime the 1930 Cole Bros. train and wagons remained parked at the Venice Transportation Company until they were purchased by George W. Christy in May 1936. The May 16, 1936 *Billboard* covered the Christy purchase as follows. "G.W. CHRISTY BUYS FORMER COLE TRAIN. St. Louis, May 9—While playing the St. Louis Police Circus here last week with the animal acts, George W. Chris-



Photo No. 15—This Cole Bros. 1930 cage parked at the G.W. Christy quarters in South Houston, Texas in early 1940's had a huge dragon carving on the side and twin dragon heads on the skyboard. Fred D. Pfening, Jr. Collection.

ty purchased the former Cole Bros. circus equipment formerly operated by Floyd King and which had been stored in East St. Louis at the yards of the Venice Transportation Company. The transaction was made thru Henry V. Gehm, president of the transportation company.

"The equipment is being sent to winter quarters at Houston, Texas where it will be reconditioned. Christy also purchased other circus equipment in Iowa."

Christy's interest in the Cole Bros. equipment was purely speculative. He had no intention of returning to the road with a railroad circus but hoped to fix up the former Cole train and wagons and sell them. How much regular circus equipment was still loaded on the wagons is not known to the author, but it is believed much of it was still intact. Christy had not fielded a railroad circus since his 20 car Christy Bros. folded in July 1930. He had since then, however, booked various acts including liberty horses, ponies, and elephants into fairs, indoor circuses, and later to regular touring railroad shows. For the 1933 and 1934 seasons Christy and his brother, Harold, had a motorized circus, titled Lee Bros., on the road but it had not operated since then. During the past several months Christy had sold practically all of his railroad show equipment. Adkins and Terrell bought the 20 car Christy Bros. equipment in the winter of 1934-35 for their new Cole Bros. Circus and in early 1936 Christy had sold wagons formerly on his 15 car Lee Bros. Circus of 1925-26 to Ken Maynard who planned on putting a wild west show on the road in 1936, but it was very short lived. Since Christy had been so successful in moving rail show equipment over the past 18 months he figured he could get the 10 car Cole train, fix it up, and sell it at a profit.



Photo No. 16—Cole Bros. 1930 ticket wagon on the G.W. Christy lot in South Houston, Texas in early 1940's. Floyd King said this wagon had been built at his quarters in Louisville, Kentucky and once loaded in the tunnel car of his Harris Bros. Circus in 1924. Fred D. Pfening, Jr. Collection.

Unfortunately, Christy was never able to sell the Cole equipment as a unit. He advertised it for sale a number of times in the *Billboard* and prospects for moving it looked bright in late 1937 when it was reported that both Downie Bros. and Tom Mix circuses were planning to convert to rail show operation. The 1938 recession killed any hope of Christy selling the Cole plunder. He kept it all at his South Houston, Texas quarters until after World War II. In the period 1945-47 Christy then began selling all of his circus properties, animals, wagons, and clearing the South Houston quarters which he would eventually also sell.

About 1947 Frank Collins apparently purchased most, maybe all, of the former Cole wagons, however he did not move them immediately. Within the next few months the tableau wagons, calliope, cages, and ticket wagon were shipped from South Houston to new owners leaving only the baggage wagons in storage at the Christy quarters.

The Gollmar four mirror bandwagon initially went to Sutliff and Case Company in Peoria and eventually got to the Circus World Museum in Baraboo, Wis. where it remains to this day.

The Sparks sea serpent, Gollmar Diamond carving, and Gollmar small oval tableau wagons were exhibited at the Chicago Railroad fair in 1949 and 1950 and in 1952 went to the Senhauser brothers, circus fans in Ohio. All of these wagons are now in the Circus World Museum in Baraboo. The sea serpent tableau wagon is especially valuable to the Museum's collection as it is the only known wagon in existence that was on the famous Sparks Circus. To commemorate this fact the Sparks title has been painted on the skyboard.

The 1930 Cole ticket wagon plus presumably all 5 of the cages were shipped from South Houston to A. Allread of Red Bluff, California about 1947. At last report he still owned them. Photos No. 18 and 19 show the ticket wagon and three of the cages loaded on a system flat car as they arrived in California.

None of the 1930 Cole wagons had a more interesting post history than the Gentry twin steam calliope which was sold to Dr. C.S. Karland Frischkorn of Norfolk, Virginia about 1947. Dr. Karland, as he was generally known as, kept the steamer until early 1952 and then sold it to, of all people, Floyd King. King returned as a circus owner for the 1946 season with a motorized King Bros. show and operated it for two years in partnership with Harold Rumbaugh; was sole owner in 1948, and for 1949 and next four seasons had as his partners, several members of the Cristianis family. The show after the Cristianis came on prospered and for the 1952 season King planned to present a daily street parade. The show was in winterquarters at Central City Park in Macon, Georgia at the time. I was a visitor almost every weekend, and shall never forget one Sunday in February 1952 when I ran into Floyd King. He told me, "Son, come in the office with me, I've got something to show you." I went with him and inside he pulled out a photo and said, "Look, this is the steam calliope I've just purchased for our street parade this season. You will recognize it I'm sure". I did, it was the Gentry twin. Then Floyd proceeded to tell me how he once owned it, lost it with the 1930 Cole plunder, and now had it again. He was absolutely beaming as would a child with a new toy. I knew that Floyd loved a steam calliope probably better than any other personage in circus history. I well recall on the King Bros. lot in Marietta, Ga. in early season 1948 when the show had an earlier steam calliope mounted on a truck which was used for downtown bally and lot concerts, and I saw and talked with the late Deacon Albright. Deacon was getting the steamer fired up to take it downtown and give the natives a little con-

cert and I'll never forget him saying this to me.

"You know, Floyd King thinks more of this old steam calliope than the rest of the show put together."

The Gentry twin was used by King Bros. on through its final season of 1956. Afterwards it was sold to the Blue Grass Shows, carnival, and later went to an individual in the mid-west. I am in hope that eventually it will get to the Circus World Museum but at last report the owner was still asking too high a price for it. While used by Dr. Karland and later King Bros. the wagon was equipped with pneumatic tires and was pulled overland by a truck attached to the chassis. It still has this configuration. What a beauty it would be if it was restored to its original form, equipped with sunburst wheels, and assume the profile it had when it was used on the King Brothers railroad circuses 1926-30.

The remaining Cole baggage wagons, including the drop frame tableau used as the clown bandwagon, were parked at the Christy quarters for several years after the cages, ticket wagon, tableaux, and calliope had departed. As late as the early 1950's, 21 of the 22 wagons used in 1930 could be accounted for. Only the light plant wagon was missing and this probably was dismantled at some point along the line with the plant itself sold to someone. Sometime during the mid or late 50's the 10 remaining baggage wagons were scrapped. Somehow it seems strange that during the wartime years of 1944-45 when a number of small railroad circuses were organized that this excess equipment at South Houston was not utilized. It's a shame the baggage wagons were not saved but this was the sad story told so often before the days of the circus museums when so many old wagons were left to rot and ruin and finally discarded as junk. But happily four wagons formerly used on the 1930 Cole show are safe at Baraboo and hopefully the Gentry twin steam calliope, the ticket wagon, and cages will have safe, permanent homes.

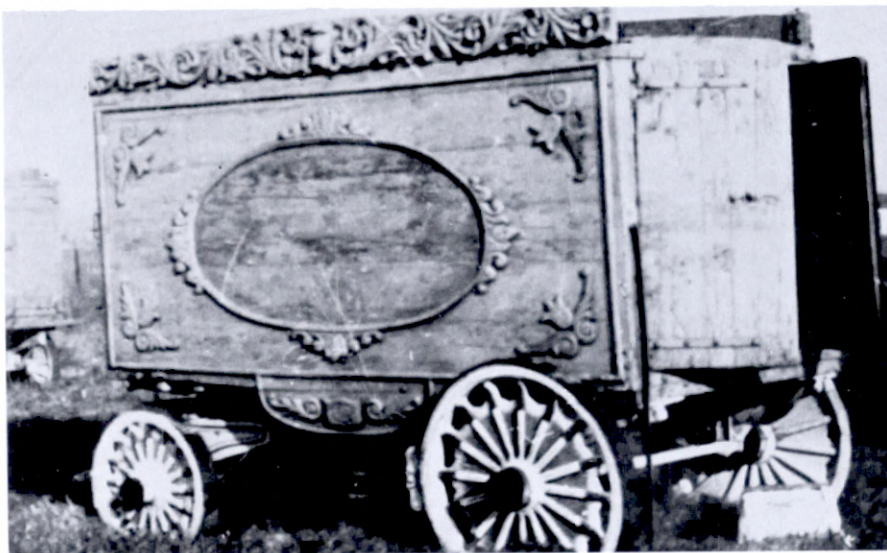
Floyd King's second venture as a circus owner ended as did his first, in bankruptcy in 1956. After then he began a long association with the Acme Circus Corporation as general agent for circuses they owned, Clyde Beatty, Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros., King Bros., and Sells & Gray. Floyd was active in the circus until his death. An interesting sidelight to the long circus career of the King brothers was that in 1954 and 1955, Howard, came to work for the huge King Bros. motorized show which was operated by Floyd and his partner, Arnold Maley. It was during these seasons I met Howard for the first time. Although he was in circus business for many years his career

was not nearly as long and versatile as was that of Floyd.

In his latter years Floyd King mellowed and became a great favorite with the organized fans, a position, unfortunately he did not hold during the days he operated his railroad shows. Some of the early fans resented the grift that was present in the King shows but in those days grift was a way of life for all but a few of the larger railroad circuses, notably Ringling-Barnum, Sparks, and the American Circus Corporation shows after 1922. In any event it is good that King later became extremely popular with the organized fans and was a much in demand speaker for group meetings during the last 15-20 years of his life. I always liked him from the day I first met him in the late 1940's. He called me "Son" as he did everyone else and was always completely honest with the circus historical information he would provide. He had a phenomenal memory and could spiel off names, dates, and places. By contrast another former circus owner about the same age as Floyd King that I knew could remember little or nothing about his show and could provide virtually nothing of historical value.

It will be noted that we are running the portions of the 1930 Cole Bros. route that are available, something we did not do for the previous seasons. All of the routes of the King railroad shows, 1925-29, are complete and on file in the Circus World Museum in

Photo No. 17—Former Gollmar small oval tableau which was used on Cole Bros. in 1930 is shown here parked on the lot at the G.W. Christy quarters in South Houston, Texas about 1946. After several subsequent moves the wagon has now been completely restored and is at the Circus World Museum in Baraboo, Wis. Fred D. Pfening, Jr. Collection.



Baraboo. A copy of this route is also being placed there. I once asked Floyd if anyone had ever compiled a 1930 Cole Bros. route and he said that so far as he knew they had not, if so, he said he had never seen one.

We hope that if anyone can add any stands to this list to please advise the *Bandwagon* office so they can be made a part of this route. Also we ask that anyone who might have a photo of a King railroad show during seasons 1925-30 which has not been previously printed to advise us and we'll print it in a supplement. Every known photo of these King shows has appeared during the six installments of this series, but surely there must be more somewhere. If so, we'd like to make them a part of the historical record of the Floyd and Howard King railroad shows 1925-30.

And so we come to the end of this story. The flat car show era is just one of several during the long lives of the King brothers. We have on hand a great taped interview of Floyd King giving his version of his motorized show of 1946-56 and hopefully in time this story will be told in the pages of the *Bandwagon*. Also the years of the King gilly-tunnel car rail shows 1919-24 would make a great article. The lack of adequate illustrative material has dampened enthusiasm for any author to take up that project so far, but hopefully, in time, this story will also be told.

I would like to acknowledge the assistance of the following who aided in the preparation of this series either by the furnishing of information or illustrations, Bob Briesendine who conducted the taped interview with Floyd King using questions furnished by the author, Fred D. Pfening, Jr., Bob Parkinson and the Circus World Museum, Warren H. Wood, Wes Herwig, Don Marcks, Tom Parkinson, Howard Tibbals, Bette Leonard, Art Doc Miller, and Percy Turner.

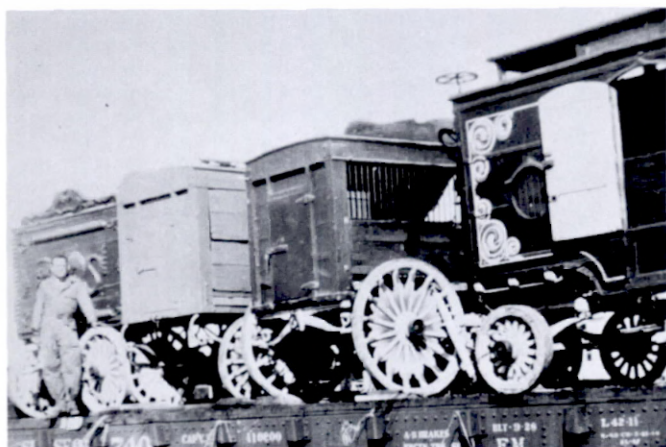


Photo No. 18—The ticket wagon and 3 cages which had been on the 1930 Cole Bros. Circus are shown here loaded on a system flat car in 1947. They are arriving in Red Bluff, California for their new owner, Arvil Allread, following shipment from South Houston, Texas. Joe Bradbury Collection.

Cole Bros. Circus Route Season of 1930

March 29—Uvalde, Texas (Opening Stand); 30—En route; 31—Eagle Pass, Texas.

April 1—Del Rio, Texas; 2—Sanderson, Texas; 3—Alpine, Texas; 4—Sierra Blanca, Texas; 5—Las Cruces, New Mexico; 6—Lordsburg, New Mexico; 7—Silver City, New Mexico; 8—Deming, New Mexico; 9—Clifton, Arizona; 10—Safford, Arizona; 11—Douglas, Arizona; 12—Bixbee, Arizona; 13—Nogales, Arizona; 14—Tucson, Arizona; 15—Ray, Arizona; 16—Mesa, Arizona; 17—Phoenix, Arizona; 18—Aja, Arizona; 19—Yuma, Arizona; Missing stands April 20-23; 24—Santa Paula, California; 25—Ventura, California; 26—Santa Barbara, California; 27—Santa Maria, California; 28—San Luis Obispo, California; 29—Pasa Robles, California; 30—Salinas, California.

May 1—Watsonville, California; 2—Hollister, California; 3—Richmond, California; Missing stands May 4-6; 7—Oroville, California; 8—Marysville, California; 9—Woodland, California; 10—Colusa, California; 11—Willows, California; Missing stands May 12-13; 14—Dunsmuir, California; 15—Ashland, Oregon; 16—Grant's Pass, Oregon; 17—Cottage Grove, Oregon; 18—Albany, Oregon; 19—Dallas, Oregon; 20—McMinnville, Oregon; 21—Tilamook, Oregon; 22—Hillsboro, Oregon; 23—The Dalles, Oregon; 24—Hood River, Oregon; 25—did not play; 26—Astoria, Oregon; 27—St. Helens, Oregon; 28—Kelso, Washington; 29—Raymond, Washington; 30—Chehalis, Washington; 31—Aberdeen, Washington.

June 1—Shelton, Washington; 2—Olympia, Washington; 3—Roslyn,

Washington; 4—Ellensburg, Washington; 5—Sunnyside, Washington; 6—Pasco, Washington; 7—Pendleton, Oregon; 8—did not play; 9—LaGrande, Oregon; 10—Baker, Oregon; 11—Weiser, Idaho; 12—Nampa, Idaho; 13—Mountain Home, Idaho; 14—Boise, Idaho; 15—Shoshone, Idaho; 16—Twin Falls, Idaho; American Falls, Idaho; 18—Pocatello, Idaho; 19—Ogden, Utah; 20—Salt Lake City, Utah; 21—Provo, Utah; 22—Price, Utah; 23—Grand Junction, Colorado; 24—Montrose, Colorado; Missing stand June 25; 26—Delta, Colorado; Missing stands June 27-30; did play Pueblo, Colorado in June or July.

July—Missing stands July 1-17; 18—Independence, Iowa; Missing stands July 19-27; 28—Festus, Missouri; Missing stands July 29-31.

August—Missing stands August 1-3; 4—Cairo, Illinois; 5—Paducah, Kentucky; Missing stands August 6-10; 11—Scottsville, Kentucky (show closed here).

CIRCUS HALL OF FAME 1979 SELECTIONS

In February of this year four additions were made to the Circus Hall of Fame in Sarasota, Florida.

They are The Original Wallenda Troupe, Karl, Helen and Herman Wallenda and Joe Geiger; Jack and Jake Mills, owners of the Mills Bros. Circus; Stewart Craven, a famous elephant trainer of the late 1800s and Janet May, aerialist.

RINGLING-BARNUM-MATTEL BUY ICE SHOWS

Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Combined Shows Inc. have acquired three traveling ice show operations from Wirtz Productions Ltd., of Chicago, Illinois.

The shows are Shipstads & Johnson Ice Follies and two units of Holiday on Ice. The Wirtz firm has extensive sports and arena holdings and operated the Cole Bros. Circus, with Hopalong Cassidy, in 1950. For a number of years in the 1930s

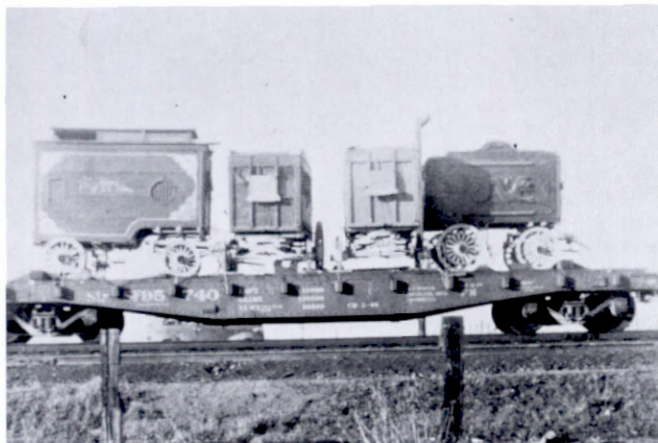


Photo No. 19—Different view of the 1930 Cole Bros. ticket wagon and three cages loaded on a system flat at Red Bluff, California in 1947. Joe Bradbury Collection.

and 1940s they produced the Barnes Bros. Circus in Chicago and Detroit.

Mattel's Ringling Barnum firm is now touring six different arena attractions, and in 1980 will have seven units with a circus in Australia.

"ANNALS OF THE AMERICAN CIRCUS 1793-1829"

by Stuart Thayer

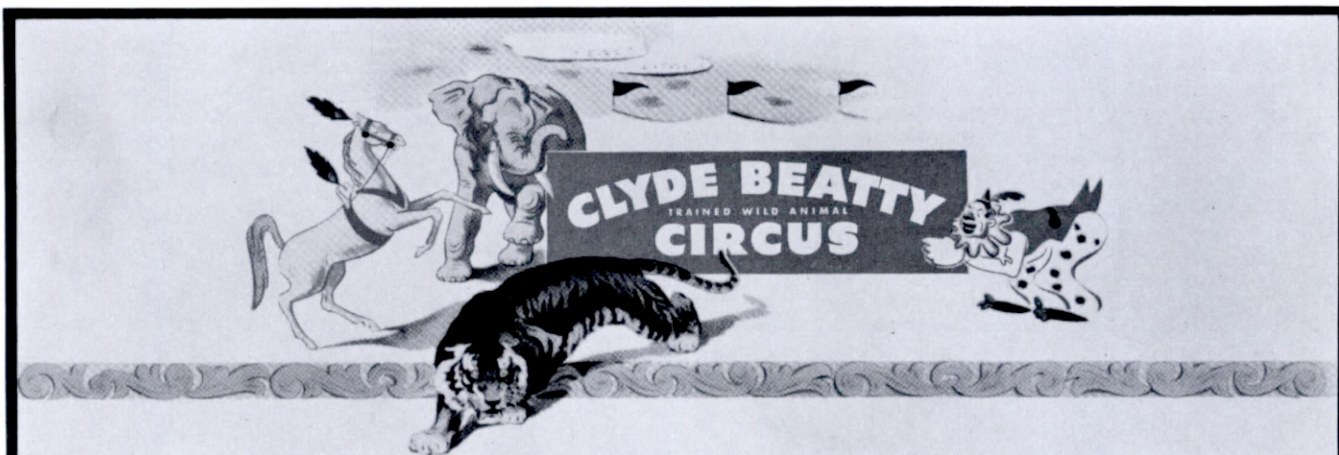
For the last four years the author has been visiting libraries (fifty-six of them) and reading newspapers (80,000 of them) in an attempt to chronicle the earliest days of the circus in America. This book is offered as a result of that effort and is the most complete record compiled to date. Every act, every performer, every stand and every newspaper review he found is here. Most of the companies listed have never had their names published before; most of the performers in this book are unknown to circus historians. The index contains over four hundred-fifty performers' names. You will find here the first combination of circus and menagerie; the first bareback rider in America; the first use of the canvas tent and many other innovative events in the history of the circus.

Paperbound, 5"x8", 8 illustrations, 240 pages.

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AMERICA'S LAST RAILROAD CIRCUS

CLYDE BEATTY CIRCUS 1956

THE FIRST TOUR

By Doyle L. Davis

The year 1956 was a political year, but aren't they all. The political conventions were held in August. To no one's surprise it was Dwight Eisenhower and Richard Nixon for the Republicans and Adlai E. Stevenson and Estes Kefauver for the Democrats. The Republicans won on November 6. The Prohibition Party got 27,087 votes. This year saw the rise of Elvis Presley and songs like "Don't Be Cruel", "Hound Dog", "Love Me Tender", and "Blue Suede Shoes". Grace Kelly married Prince Ranier of Monaco. The bestseller was Payton Place, a sensational story about sex in a small town. The last Union Army Veteran died. This was the kind of year waiting for circuses.

The season started in February for some shows. Clyde Bros. Circus, an indoor show, was making dates in the short month. Likewise, James M. Cole, Orin Davenport, Hamid-Morton, Miller Brothers, and both Polack Brothers units were making indoor dates. Orin Davenport, Miller Brothers, and the Polack western unit had even played some January dates. The January 14 issue of *Billboard* announced the new Cristiani Brothers Circus would open February 25, but a latter issue indicated the show changed to a March opening.

The shows were getting noticed as being very good. Three baggage cars left the Clyde Beatty Circus winter-quarters carrying Clyde Beatty's wild animals, elephants, and horses. They would be used to hype the Orin Davenport Detroit date (*Billboard* 2-4-56). The *Billboard* noted the Polack western unit had "much new top

(Season Opening Stand, 1956)
DEMING-AIRPORT
 AFTERNOON ONLY
 AT 2 P.M.
 DOORS OPEN AT 1 P.M.
THURSDAY MARCH 15

This letterhead was used by the Beatty show during its last years under Clyde Beatty's ownership. It was rehased from an earlier Russell Bros. design. The title is on a blue background and the animals are in blue and orange. Pfening collection.

talent" and the eastern unit was a "power packed edition". First season reports had Miller Brothers indoor circus playing to good business. The Minneapolis Shrine opened to big crowds. Early reports indicated 1956 might be a good circus year.

March saw more shows coming out of quarters. Cristiani Brothers announced a March 12-13 opening at West Palm Beach. About 35 trucks would be used for this new tented truck circus. It would linger in the Florida sunshine for a while before moving north (*Billboard* 3-10-56).

The big event in March was the opening of The Clyde Beatty Circus, America's 2nd largest tented railroad circus, which would become the last and largest tented railroad circus at season's end. The show headed west to California on a 15 car train with the following makeup derived from a list in the Dec. 73-Jan. 74 issue of the *Little Circus Wagon*. This loading order was submitted to LCW by Ed Lester. The same equipment would arrive in Brownwood, Texas in the fall loaded in a slightly different order.

This newspaper ad was used at the opening stand of the Beatty show in Deming, N.M. in 1956. The ad was drawn by Forrest Freeland and was used during the first tour of the 1956 season. Joe Bradbury collection.



FLAT NO. 51

1 Beatty's lions' cage (5) 18 ft.
 (4)(7) Cages 4 thru 9 were small cages
 for the (5)(8) sideshow menagerie.
 They loaded two (6)(9) abreast and each
 was 8 ft. long 24 ft.
 83 Arena 13 ft.
 82 Trunks 14 ft.

FLAT NO. 52

2 Beatty's tigers' cage (5) 18 ft.
 3 Beatty's lions' cage (5) 14 ft.
 84 Wardrobe 18 ft.
 44 Red Ticket Wagon 18 ft.

FLAT NO. 53

40 Bibles 18 ft.
 30 Cookhouse Ranges 14 ft.
 45 White Ticket Wagon 17 ft.
 51 Seat Wagon 24 ft.

FLAT NO. 54

52 Seat Wagon 24 ft.
 93 Seat Wagon 24 ft.
 94 Seat Wagon 24 ft.

FLAT NO. 55

98 Rest Rooms 20 ft.
 41 Concessions 20 ft.
 81 Band and Beatty Props 14 ft.
 80 Bibles 14 ft.

FLAT NO. 56

31 Cookhouse 17 ft.
 23 Tractor 12 ft.
 90 Big Top Canvas 23 ft.
 21 Water Tank Truck 20 ft.

FLAT NO. 57

91 Big Top Poles 50 ft.
 24 Tractor (between center poles) 12 ft.
 101 Train Light Plant (between center
 poles) 5 ft.

The No. 31 dining department wagon is shown being pushed off the runs during the unloading at Brownwood, Texas during the second fall tour of the Beatty show in 1956. All photos were taken by the author in Brownwood.

22 Crane Truck 24 ft.

FLAT NO. 58

42 Power Plant 15 ft.
 20 Stake Driver Truck 17 ft.
 96 Jacks 14 ft.
 85 Props 23 ft.

FLAT NO. 59

99 Stringers 24 ft.
 46 Sideshow 29 ft.
 25 Tractor 12 ft.
 43 Light Department 12 ft.

It is possible the 99 stringer wagon in this list and the extra seat wagon in Brownwood, Texas are the same.

The show carried about 4 tents. Ed Lester estimated the Big Top, 140 ft. with 3-50 ft. middles; Sideshow, 60 ft. with two or three 30 ft middles; padroom-dressing top; dining tent. At Brownwood, the sideshow had three middles. Both the sideshow and big top had a marquee in front.

While the show was opening in Deming, N.M., the advance was building in Los Angeles. Jack Knight, Press Agent, started newspaper publicity. Mae Hong was expected to join him in the story department. Shirley Carroll was reported to be handling the radio

The No. 46 wagon shown here carried the side show canvas, which was a 60 with two or three 50 foot middles.



and television publicity. The *Billboard* seemed to note the outstanding advance on Beatty after running reports on the problems with the Ringling advance. Shirley Carroll reportedly was responsible for a 1 hour TV remote on KTTV on opening day and 90 minutes on KCOP Sunday, March 25 with an auto dealer sponsor tie in.

The Clyde Beatty Circus left its first stand at Deming, New Mexico, March 15 after drawing well with a matinee only. March 16 at Tucson, Arizona and March 17 at Casa Grande, Arizona resulted in only fair business. Yuma, Arizona on March 18 had a strong matinee and the usual Sunday night crowd. It was Monday, March 19 when a pair of half houses were recorded in Palm Springs. Wind and cold in normally sunny California was blamed for the half empty tent. Cold drink sales probably slumped, but they made it up on hot popcorn. The show was enroute Tuesday, March 20, but the jump wasn't too long, so most of the time was used to ready things for the 12 day Los Angeles date beginning the next day.

Business slumped on the new lot at the Coliseum since the Washington and Hill lot was no longer available. Even with the extra day off, the show apparently had been routed in a day too soon, running smack into the Academy Awards. The show tried hard with 6-60 inch search lights, a strong performance and a cocktail party for radio, press, and TV people. The results were a scant quarter house at night with even less for the afternoon show.

The *Billboard* carried a review of the show in the March 31, 1956 issue. It noted the outward appearance was the best in years. This was the first time Clyde Beatty shared top billing with anyone as Duncan Renaldo, the Cisco Kid, received co-star status. There was more spectacle and color than in previous years. Maybe it was felt color and spectacle was necessary if the show was to go east. The reviewer was impressed with Jane Beatty and the Beattyettes. The show ran 2 hours and 30 minutes. What follows is a detailed account of the Los Angeles performance reproduced from the *Billboard*.

"Renaldo, astride Diablo, leads the Spec 'Fiesta Time' in his Cisco Kid wardrobe and waves flamboyantly as he parades around. As the line moves thru the exit, the Hanel Troupe (4) takes over Ring 1 and the Ivanov Troupe (3) do expert bar work with comedy turns to please. Beatty's cluster of 15 clowns follows in a walk-around.

"With the center ring filled with the arena for Beatty's mixed animal act, the trainer himself takes over. Red sawdust is used as the ground cover and it shows well in the vari colored flood lights in a darkened tent. The

Beatty pattern is followed. Altho many patrons are well acquainted with it, they still view it as if for the first time.

"As the arena is struck, Colleen Alpaugh and Tiny Gallagher perform admirably in Rings 1 and 3 respectively with elephant and ponies. The clowns return for their second walk-around.

"The sixth display features, still in Rings 1 and 3, Clines and Loretta La Pearl's dogs. The Clines feature a group of matched blacks while Miss La Pearl offers a group of small canines. Miss La Pearl presents one in frilly doll dress that makes good entertainment.

"The show takes to the air with strong turns on the traps by Miss Gallagher, the Great Scoule and the two Hanel girls over the three rings. Miss Gallagher's head-stand and foot-loop juggling is combined with Scoule's exciting heel catches and the Hanel's iron jaw turns and other antics to make this one of the top turns of the show.

"Cline then takes the center ring with his 12 liberty horse drill, with the six palominos and six chestnuts forming into a checkered pattern. Rings 1 and 2 are bolstered with six matched black ponies in one and Milonga Cline adequately handling five shetlands in the other.

"An outstanding presentation in display 9 with Mario and Josephine Ivanov working with unusual props including a roly-poly stand constructed over a world globe. Their work is exceptional and the props add to its color. The Freddy Konings male duo sells well in the center with one finger stands and other acrobatics. Ignio in Ring 3 carries out the extraordinary offering with juggling, making for another three ring outstanding sequence.

"The clowns are back with another walk-around. And the center ring is the setting for the Beattyettes and Milonga Cline singing "When You Wish Upon A Star" to good applause. Filmy white costumes and a good job of lighting add to the turn.

"With the show slightly half over, Renaldo returns in a chase of three 'bandits'. Taking his place in the center ring, he briefs his career as the Cisco Kid and gives a safety pitch against leaving loaded pistols around the home. There is a turn of trick riding followed by Poodles Hanneford acting the part of the ill-fated prospector. Renaldo is, of course, the do-gooder with Cox announcing that Cisco never kills, as the bandit trio is headed toward a sheriff who is supposed to be waiting ready.

"Carl Lenares wins applause with his wire work and feet to feet somersault. Strong also over Ring 1 are the Latinos (the Herbie Webers) with their tight wire turn that features basket



This program with Duncan Renaldo's name on the cover was used during the spring illfated California tour of the Beatty show in 1956. Pfening collection.

walks and other capers. Josephino (Ivanov) in Ring 3 wins with her bicycle and unicycle on the wire.

"The clowns are in Ring 1 with Jack La Pearl and Laurence Cross pleasing with their hoist to the tent top as the Joey's elongated trouser legs reach to the ground.

"The Bogino Troupe (6) holds the audience's attention with the expertly executed Risley. They are properly spotted in the center ring.

These two half sheet panel lithos were designed for the 1956 tour. The sheet on the left is the only one used to advertise the Cisco Kid, Duncan Renaldo. Kent Ghirard collection.



"The pace is picked up with the Ferreras Duo, switching places as understanders in a high perch turn. The Great Scoule entertains with his cloud swing over Ring 3. Spotted without needed fanfare over Ring 1 is the Great Humberto (Herbie Weber) performing a walk up and foot slide for life.

"The next turn features the 15 Beattyettes in monkey costumes carrying out the assigned "Monkey Capers", as prepared by Jane Beatty. The web turn goes well and has the addition of the Freddy Konings as gorilla and trainer in bar spins and acrobatics.

"After the clown walk-around, Colleen Alpaugh, Milonga Cline, and Tiny Gallagher are in Rings 1, 2, and 3 with the elephants. The center ring features the three baby elephants well trained by Dick Shipley."

The *Billboard* (3-31-56) ended at this point although the Hugo Zachini cannon act was mentioned earlier in the same article.

Victor Robbins headed the band composed of the following members: Frank Ballou, air calliope; Albert Yoder, snare drum; Doss Gibson, bass drum; Lonnie Harris, tuba; Clarence Swager, trumpet; Karl Wohrmund, trumpet; Bob Grove, trumpet; Walter Peele, baritone; Lew Bader, trombone; and Andy Anderson, trombone.

Attendance in Los Angeles was down from previous years. The first nine days were reported to be down by 35 percent. Business did start to pick up before running into unusual weather at the close of the Los Angeles run. The Wednesday, March 21st opening was weak. Saturday was a three-quarter matinee and one-half night. Sunday was unusually good with a turnaway in the afternoon and one-half house at night. The following Saturday on March 31st the show drew two half houses. Rain began at 7 p.m. Saturday night. Most unusual weather hit on Sunday afternoon in the form of rain, snow and hail. This weather cut the matinee to less than a half house in the afternoon. Things got even worse at night with less than 500 customers.

It was also in Los Angeles that Beatty announced Duncan (The Cisco Kid) Renaldo would leave the show on April 16th by mutual agreement. The reason was given as Renaldo's TV sponsors refusal to allow him to do an extra charge concert following the regular performance. In any case, reports noted that Renaldo did draw children. Children at night shows were more noticeable than in previous years. In Los Angeles, Renaldo was moved from the middle of the show to near the end of the performance. For what purpose it is not known except to keep good concessions customers in the tent as long as possible. After each show, Renaldo would pass out photos with the TV sponsors name. By early May, he reportedly passed out 85,000 photos.



There was hope he would remain for the rest of the California tour.

Between the 2nd and 16th of May when Renaldo was due to depart, business was poor. Long Beach followed Los Angeles on the 2nd and 3rd of May. The first day was one-third and one-half houses with slightly stronger business on Tuesday, the second day. Lakewood on Wednesday saw the effort to garner more school kids by moving the matinee back to 3:45 p.m. result in a scant quarter house. The second of two scheduled matinees at Hawthorne on Friday, May 6th was canceled due to poor business. The next day on Saturday, May 7th, the first day of a two day stand at East Los Angeles saw a quarter house for afternoon and 20 percent house at night. Business became even worse Sunday.

The next week saw some improvement in business. On Monday, May 9th, the show had a quarter house followed by a good three-quarter house at night. At Santa Ana the following day, the show did some of its best business since Los Angeles. A near capacity matinee and strong three-quarters night gave hope of better days.

The show was not without problems that week. The show train was sideswiped by a switch engine, but the absence of equipment damage or personal injury just might be an omen of good things around the corner.

One of the good things was Duncan (The Cisco Kid) Renaldo's decision to

Big top lights and cable were carried in wagon No. 43.



The lot in Brownwood is pictured with two of the three 24 ft. seat wagons at the end of the big top.

stay with the show through the California tour instead of leaving the following Monday as anticipated. He would now stay another month until the last California date on May 23rd at Sacramento. It was also reported consideration was being given to reducing matinee prices which was \$1.50 for adults and 75 cents for children with \$1.35 for reserved seats to all ages.



The No. 30 cookhouse range wagon is pictured next to the dining top.

Monday, 16th of April, 1956, was to have been a crucial day for the Clyde Beatty Circus. One of its major co-stars, The Cisco Kid, was to leave the show. However the decision had been made to extend his presence another month and business had improved the previous week. It appeared the show's fortunes were improving. However, if fortunes can take a turn for the better, the can just as easily reverse.

On Wednesday, April 18, Andrew Grotzky of Grand Island, Nebraska, an employee, was killed when the show played Hemet. The coroner reported he was apparently kicked to death by an elephant in the menagerie.

On Saturday, April 21, Clifton J. Hartson of Sun Valley, California suffered head injuries and a broken left shoulder. A wagon came loose from a flat car as the train was arriving in Santa Monica for a two-day stand. He was reported as "improving but still in poor condition".

Business at Santa Monica was a quarter house in the afternoon and a half house at night on Saturday. Sunday saw a near capacity matinee and a quarter house for night.

The high spot of the following week was two near capacity houses at Pomona on Wednesday, April 25th.

The low spot for the same week was at Fontana on Thursday, April 26th.

The jacks for the seats were carried in Wagon No. 96, shown here being spotted on the lot by a work elephant.





The stake driver was mounted on this truck No. 20.

Joe Applegate, boss canvasman, and the Bogino Risley troupe left the show. Paul Pyle took over the duties of the boss canvasman. The Hanel troupe had left earlier. It was reported the Hanel Troupe jumped 3178 miles in five days to join Hunt Brothers Circus. A hard rain at Fontana saw two half houses.

So-so business followed at North Hollywood with one-third house and one-half house. The show traveled overland eight miles to find a three-quarter house and one-quarter house at Panorama City. Lancaster recorded a one-third and one-half house. The Clyde Beatty Circus was now into the fateful month of May.

A trade paper reported Beatty was canceling dates in San Francisco, Oakland, and Sacramento to turn east in an effort to find better business. The show was now going to leave California after its Sunday matinee at Concord on the 20th of May. The show would play Reno, Nevada the 21st of May.

It was also reported agent Bill Moore was in and out of the hospital due to an illness. He was out of the hospital, the show was due to head east, and business began to pick up. False hopes were kindled. There was a small frown from fate on Sunday, May 6th at Bakersfield. Frank Orman was riding in a cab when it was hit by a truck. He

The big top pole wagon No. 91 is shown spotting quarter poles prior to the canvas being unrolled.



SEASON ROUTE FAREWELL TOUR OF 1956

Clyde IN PERSON **BEATTY** and his **GIGANTIC RAILROAD CIRCUS**



Featuring The Idol
of Millions of Boys
and Girls
MR. CIRCUS HIMSELF
CLYDE BEATTY

Mar. 15 Deming, N. M.
16 Tucson, Ariz.
17 Casa Grande, Ariz.
18 Yuma, Ariz.
19 Palm Springs, Calif.
20 En Route

Mar. 21 thru

Apr. 1 Los Angeles, Calif.
2 & 3 Long Beach, Calif.
4 Lakewood, Calif.
5 Bellflower, Calif.
6 Hawthorne, Calif.
7 & 8 East L. A., Calif.
9 Downey, Calif.
10 Santa Ana, Calif.
11 Escondido, Calif.
12 thru 15 San Diego, Calif.
16 Oceanside, Calif.
17 Anaheim, Calif.
18 Hemet, Calif.
19 Riverside, Calif.
20 Redondo Beach, Calif.
21 & 22 Santa Monica, Calif.
23 San Pedro, Calif.
24 Baldwin Park, Calif.
25 Pomona, Calif.
26 Fontana, Calif.

27 Monrovia, Calif.
28 N. Hollywood, Calif.
29 Panorama City, Calif.
30 Lancaster, Calif.

May 1 Visalia, Calif.
2 Merced, Calif.
3 Stockton, Calif.
4 Modesto, Calif.
5 Fresno, Calif.
6 Bakersfield, Calif.
7 Victorville, Calif.
8 San Bernardino, Calif.
9 Burbank, Calif.
(Closed)

RETURN TO WINTERQUARTERS
AT DEMING, N. M.



was treated for fractured ribs and cut scalp and released from the hospital. Otherwise, Bakersfield was good for the show with a three-quarters house. The previous week, Stockton had a heavy turnout the 3rd. Things began to look better.

Bakersfield on May 6th was the beginning of the most fateful week in the long history of the Clyde Beatty Circus. Victorville had a one half and two thirds house the next day. On Tuesday, 50 percent and 85 percent houses were recorded at San Bernardino. Business was starting to improve. Then came Burbank on Wednesday.

The show unloaded and began to set

up rather slowly. The menagerie was sidewalled and the big top was slow going into the air. Everyone seemed to work as if they had something else on their minds. Everyone was interested in the two strangers that had appeared on the lot. These two men huddled with performers. Then they would disappear into the office wagon. Later, they would reappear to confer with different performers. The two men were James Kelly and Larry Rio, agents for the American Guild of Variety Artists (AGVA). The agents

A work elephant is pictured pulling a roll of the big top canvas from wagon No. 90.





had been sent by Irwin P. Mazei, western regional AGVA director. He instructed them to prohibit members from performing unless they were paid.

It has been reported to the AGVA that the circus was behind in wages. The show was two weeks behind in pay plus it had a weeks hold back. This came to wages being three weeks behind. The musicians were reported to be paid up and not involved in the negotiations. The *Billboard* reported some workingmen were paid up and some were behind. The total was estimated at \$15,000 of unpaid wages.

A trade magazine reported the equipment had been painted with the name of the corporation that owned the equipment only a short time earlier. However, it was reported this had no connection with rumors of change of management or a possible closing. Now it was possible the show would close.

As the afternoon progressed, the possibility of a matinee grew dim. At 4:45 p.m. Orman ordered the matinee canceled, and 150 ticket holders had their money refunded. There were still hopes for a night performance. Negotiations continued. Finally, workers began to slowly tear down the show. There would be no night performance. The teardown progressed slowly as there was no hurry to get to the next town without performers. The train was loaded and allowed to sit on the siding until Thursday.

Art Concello appeared on the lot Thursday night and rumors started to

Wagon No. 82 carried trunks and served as a dressing room on the lot. The horse top is in the background.

fly. When he visited other shows earlier in the season, there were rumors of partnerships or some other situations. The visit to the Beatty show was no different. However, Clyde Beatty remained in control of the show and Concello told the *Billboard* he was enjoying a vacation. He didn't say if it started out as a business trip and turned into a vacation when no business was done.

The show train had left Deming, New Mexico to seek the following route:

March 15—Deming, New Mexico; 16—Tucson, Arizona; 17—Casa Grande, Arizona; 18—Yuma, Arizona; 19—Palm Springs, California; 20—enroute; 21-31—Los Angeles, California.

April 1—Los Angeles, California; 2-3—Long Beach; 4—Lakewood; 5—Bell Flower; 6—Hawthorne; 7-8—East Los Angeles; 9—Downey; 10—Santa Ana; 11—Escondido; 12-15—San Diego; 16—Oceanside; 17—Anaheim; 18—Hemet; 19—Riverside; 20—Redondo Beach; 21-22—Santa Monica; 23—San Pedro; 24—Baldwin Park; 25—Pomona; 26—Fontana; 27—Monrovia; 28—North Hollywood; 29—Panorama City; 30—Lancaster.

May 1—Visalia, California; 2—Merced; 3—Stockton; 4—Modesto; 5—

The six small 8 ft. cages for the menagerie No. 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8 were loaded cross wise on the flat car.



Fresno; 6—Bakersfield; 7—Victorsville; 8—San Bernadino; 9—Burbank*

*Both performances canceled and show entrained to Deming, New Mexico.

The show canceled the following dates when it returned to quarters:

May 10—Oxhard, California; 11—Santa Barbara; 12—Santa Maria; 13—San Luis Obispo; 14—Paso Robles; 15—Salinas; 16—Watsonville; 17—San Jose; 18—Antioch; 19—Napa; 20—Concord; 21—Reno, Nevada.

The show train moved out of Burbank and headed back to quarters at Deming, New Mexico. A confused situation and many unanswered questions were left behind. The major question was why couldn't the union and management agree to at least two performances and divide the money that resulted in some mutually acceptable way. The confused situation was what would be done with so much good equipment and so many good personnel who had been released from the show and would soon be released from other failing shows.

The Clyde Beatty Circus started out with high hopes and a promising future. They were to challenge Ringling. It might have been the last tented railroad circus. Now Ringling was the only tented railroad circus, and appearances indicated it was destined to become the last tented railroad circus—OR WAS IT?

The second tour of the Clyde Beatty Circus, and the last under-canvas railroad circus will be covered in the second installment in the next issue.

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WITH THE FOREPAUGH SELLS CIRCUS IN 1902: A JOURNALISTS' VACATION ABOARD LEW SELLS' PRIVATE CAR

Few accounts have so graphically captured the detail and headaches of running a large circus as the following narrative. Never before published, the original is an incomplete typescript diary in the Special Collections department of the Library of the New York State Historical Association at Cooperstown, to whom we are grateful for permission to first publish the account. Minor grammatical and spelling errors have been corrected and, since there is no account of being "With the Band," that original title has been changed.

Richard C. Ellsworth graduated from St. Lawrence University, Canton, New York, in 1895 and began work with the Brooklyn Daily Eagle newspaper. Later publisher of the Carthage (N.Y.) Tribune and then business manager of the Brooklyn Times, he returned to his alma mater in 1922 as a trustee and secretary until his death in 1948. Long interested in history, Ellsworth founded the University's museum which now bears his name and, from 1931 to 1945, was a member of the Board of Trustees of the New York State Historical Association.

Ellsworth's birthplace in Canton was beside the New York Central railroad tracks and his acquaintance with railroad men is said to have led to his interest in the circus. Ellsworth had a small library of about twenty-five circus books and a miniature circus which he often exhibited. Among Ellsworth's books now at the New York State Historical Association is his annotated copy of William C. Thompson's *On The Road With A*

By Richard C. Ellsworth
Edited by Richard W. Flint

Circus (1903), based, wrote Ellsworth, on the 1901 season of the Adam Forepaugh & Sells Bros. Circus (though chapter 15 reproduces the 1902 itinerary). Thompson, according to a typed note in a copy of his book now at the Circus World Museum, was a journalist who was city editor of the New York Evening Telegram in the 1890s. He was later associated with showmen Thompson and Dundy of Hippodrome and Coney Island fame and with the Forepaugh and Pawnee Bill shows. Ellsworth's brief manuscript notes in his copy of *On The Road With A Circus* indicate that he, Ellsworth, was a frequent circus visitor in addition to covering it for his newspaper during the Brooklyn stand and was a "good friend" of ringmaster Bob Stickney and others. As this account reveals, he was also well enough acquainted with circus owner Lewis Sells to be a guest on his private car.

While there has always been a fascination with the circus, turn-of-the-century Americans were particularly intrigued with the logistics of circus operation. The interest was not unexpected for the same period saw rapid growth in big business—trusts, pools, and holding companies held the public's attention. Americans wanted

Forepaugh-Sells always featured a great parade. As the text shows, the daily march was not always feasible. Pfening collection.

to comprehend such mammoth operations as the circus and numerous newspaper and magazine articles appeared on the subject. Ellsworth, a journalist and circus fan, may have contemplated such an article but whether he published any is unknown. In any event, his typescript diary, though incomplete, is a first-rate account and especially valuable for its intimate portrait of the daily trials and tribulations of a circus manager.

Ithaca, N.Y., July 28.

Reached here last night at 6 o'clock, after a day's ride from New York on the Lehigh Valley Railroad. Passed through the coal country of Pennsylvania for the first time, and consequently saw a coal breaker for the first time. The line of the railroad through the mountains shows the traveller some beautiful scenery and I had little time to do anything else but look out of the window. The approach to Wilkes-Barre is magnificent. The town first appears at the base of the hill, on the summit of which is the train. Besides the town, one can see for miles and miles up and down the valley in which Wilkes-Barre lies. In a straight line it is barely three miles from the summit of the hill to the town, but as the train goes in making the descent, it is twenty miles. The day was bright and sunshiny until within ten miles of Ithaca, when there came a severe thunder shower, with rain so hard that nothing could be seen from the windows. By the time Ithaca was reached the sun was out again, though of course it was near sunset.



Found the circus trains in the D.L. and W. Yards,¹ adjacent to the Lehigh Valley station, so I put my baggage into No. 4, Mr. Sells' car, and departed for the lot. Found the tents up on Percy Field, and a bad field it was. The rain that I had met on the railroad had been accompanied by wind, and between the two the side-show had been blown down, but the menagerie tent, the only other tent of any size up, had safely withstood the stress of weather.

Mr. Sells was glad to see me, but I found him very blue and Mr. Thompson² told me on the quiet that he was pretty nearly worn out. The show had had constant rain, mud, bad lots and poor railroad service for five weeks. The stock was worn out, men had left and all in all, it was only main strength that had kept the outfit on the road. Spent the evening with Mr. Lew and went to bed at about ten o'clock. Woke up at half past six this morning and Mr. Sells called from his stateroom that he was going to get up and would like to have me get up too. So of course I got right up and was ready for the street even before he was.

As soon as we were out of doors fresh worries began. Mr. Lew learned that the D.L. & W., the road that was to haul us to Elmira, Tuesday's stand, would have to cut all the sections in two, and take only ten cars to a train as far as Owego, on account of the heavy grades. That of course meant long delays in transit. In addition, the lot was so muddy, being low and swampy, that it was easy to see that we were to have trouble getting off it after the night show. As a matter of fact, it was found necessary, in order to get loaded at all, to stand every wagon on the firm roadway, off from the lot, and carry the whole show, from little bundle to big, out to the wagons, and load there.

Light rains early in the forenoon made necessary the postponing of parade until about 11 o'clock. Even then we sent out wet weather uniforms only, and made but a short march. I went out ahead with Bob Stickney. The afternoon was bright and clear and we had a good house. As soon as the performance was over, Mr. Lew began to make preparations for moving. Supper was run off early and the cook house went away. Everything in the big top that wasn't actually necessary for the night show was loaded up and sent to the cars. Mr. Sells and I drove down at about the usual time, nine o'clock, and Mr. Sells went right to bed. I sat up until about eleven, watching the show come down, then I went to bed too.

Mr. Lew woke me up several times in the night by calling for "John," to go out and see how matters were getting along. When I finally awoke, at about five o'clock, I saw immediately that our car was right where it was when I went to bed. You see, in cutting the



Richard C. Ellsworth, an early circus fan and author of this account.

train into six sections to get it out of town there was necessarily lost a great deal of time, for the railroad company couldn't furnish motive power enough to move all six sections at the same time. Well, just as I woke up I heard an engine whistle in the distance and pretty soon we were coupled up and climbing the hill. It took us about two hours to make the run from Ithaca to Owego, where the Ithaca branch joins the main line. I didn't get up till about seven o'clock, just as we were going into Owego, but I was fully dressed before we got our full section of nineteen cars together again and started for Elmira. If we were a long time getting from Ithaca to Owego, the railroad company certainly made a great run from Owego to Elmira with us. We made only one stop, at Waverly, for water and our average speed was about 35 miles an hour. Reached Elmira at about nine o'clock.

Elmira, N.Y., July 29. 70 miles.

Unloaded at the D.L. and W. station. Very late in arriving, for it begins to be late for the show when it is after six o'clock. Had just begun to unload the first section when our section (the third always) arrived. Mr. Lew was right on deck the moment our section stopped and we hurried out to find Jack Shoemate, superintendent of stock, to see how things were getting along. Having seen Jack we got into the wagon that Mr. Lew uses to go to and from the station and on his trips around the towns and started for the lot. Picked up Mr. Thompson on the way. Drove through Elmira's main

street, across the river and turned to the left on the principal residential street of the city. Found the lot a long ways out on the Fair Ground. Found Mr. Cole³ there waiting for us. On account of the length of the haul it was after ten o'clock before the stake and chain wagons arrived and the lay out of the lot could be commenced. After that the wagons began to come up in rapid succession, first the cook house wagons, then the harness shop and the blacksmith shop, then the horse tents, then the canvass wagons and the pole wagons, then the property wagons, followed by the miscellaneous wagons and lastly the wagons from the cage train (our section). Because it was late everybody turned out on canvass—ticket sellers, performers and everybody who did not have some other particular task to perform. The big top went up at about noon, the menagerie tent going up a little ahead of it. Breakfast came about the same time, though Mr. Lew and I had breakfast on our car between Owego and Elmira. As soon as the tents were up we began the hustle to get the parade out. It was a fine day and so we put on our best uniforms. I went out ahead with Bob Stickney and we made all the principal streets. Got back about half past two. The next half hour was taken up with getting the cages into the menagerie tent and with getting that tent ready for the opening. There was a dense crowd out around the front door, for it was long past our regular opening time. Finally got the doors open a little after three and because there was such a rush Mr. Sells put me at one of the gates to help. My principal duty was to "take quarters." That is, to collect 25 cents from people who were trying to get their children in for nothing when they should pay half price. I only stayed there until the rush was over and then I went back into the big tent to watch the crowd. We put the performance on in all its details, even to the band concert before the performance began. It was after six o'clock before the concert was over and the last spectator was out. I went over to dinner about five o'clock. From my seat in the tent I had a fine view out over the river and of hills and valleys beyond. The day was perfect and I could already see that my appetite was picking up under the influence of life out of doors. The night house was good but not especially big. Drove down to the train at nine o'clock with Mr. Lew and soon went to bed. We loaded in the Northern Central yards, quite near the lot and had a good place. Set two trains on two separate crossings, and that of course expedited matters. Mr. Lew told me on the way to the train that he never expected to make the stand, the obstacles were so great. Anyway, it was only his push and energy that got the show up. Mr.

Cole after hearing of the rain, mud and general bad luck that had pursued the show for the past four weeks, said that there wasn't another circus man in the country or out of it, either, for that matter, who could have kept such a big show going every day as Mr. Sells had.⁴ Was asleep when the trains left Elmira, so I don't remember anything more about that town.

Williamsport, Pa., July 30. 78 Miles.

Woke up at a little station called Trout Run, having run through Canton, Pennsylvania, during the night. Road passes through a wild country between Elmira and Williamsport, and we saw only hills from daylight until Williamsport was reached. John was getting breakfast, while I dressed and I could hear Mr. Lew moving about in his room. Finished breakfast just as we drew into Williamsport, which place we reached about 7:30. Many people out to see the show trains come in. Before going up to the lot I skipped up to the centre of the town, found a barber shop and got a shave. Lot was not far from the centre of the town, so I walked out. Had some trouble getting some of the heavy wagons through, as there was a muddy hill to climb. When the show was on the same lot two years ago a banner pole fell and killed a little girl. All of the old-timers with the show recall the accident. Big top goes up in good time and parade goes out a little after ten. Decide to try a new experience in this town, so I tell Frank Melville that I want to make the parade on a cage. "All right," says Frank. "Just pick one out and climb up." I already had my eye on no. 39, a four horse cage that goes out close behind the band wagon. Climb up and tell the driver that I am going to ride with him. It was my first ride on top and I found it a fine place from which to see the town. I also tried my hand at driving. The driver showed me how to hold the reins, how to keep the "leaders" up, how to turn corners, and the result was that for most of the parade in Williamsport I drove a four horse cage. Made quite a long march here, through the Main street and a good part of the residential quarter of the town. Hugo Mayer, of H. and J.H. Mayer, New York, who have the programme contract with the show, the Buffalo Bill and the Barnum and Bailey, on for a day's visit. Have several chats with him during the day and he tells me about the storm in New York and how cold it has been since. Cook house is pitched just behind the side-show, so we eat our dinner and supper to the music of the side-show band. Day fairly pleasant, but with a slight shower in the morning. Drive down to the train with Mr. Lew about nine o'clock and go to bed early.

Lock Haven, Pa., July 31. 25 Miles.

When I wake up this morning the

train is standing still. Peek out of my window and see a big pile of hay and straw in a vacant lot next to the track. Conclude that that must be the lot, and while I am still looking out I see the first baggage wagon drive onto the lot and stop close to the pile of hay. Look at my watch and find that it is only a little after five o'clock and that we are in early because of the short run. Turn over and go to sleep again and finally get up about seven o'clock. Town is a small one and is in a valley with hills all around it, big and little. Inasmuch as the lot is close to the track we don't have to have the horse out to drive up with. Mr. Lew and I just climb the fence and cross the field. Make our way to the cook-tent and wait for breakfast. Lot is small, and long and narrow. On account of the topography we are able to put up only four poles in the menagerie, though we get up all five poles for the big top. Bill Merrick, the mail man, brings me a letter from Brooklyn. We have a long run tonight, 101 miles, and Mr. Lew begins early to think about getting out of town. He also hears from the transportation man that we will have to use three divisions of the Pennsylvania to make DuBois, so in order to size up the town and see if one performance will get all the crowd, Mr. Lew goes out in the parade ahead with Bob Stickney. And as only two people can ride in the carriage, I hunt up my friend the four horse driver and make parade on top of the cage again. Lock Haven is a small country town, and there were good crowds out to see the parade. Just after dinner Mr. Lew announces that there will be but one performance in Lock Haven, and that we will tear down as soon as the afternoon show is over. Mr. Lew then hollers for "Dick" and when I appear he tells me that he wants me to go up town with him. We get into the carriage

The Cleopatra's Barge was one of the most exotic and least functional of 19th century parade wagons. It was a mainstay in the Forepaugh and Forepaugh-Sells parades for over 20 years until Henry Ringling abandoned the wagon in 1905. Ringling Museum of the Circus.



and Mr. Lew whips up "General" as if he had to start for DuBois by team. Drive to the Pennsylvania station and on the way Mr. Lew tells me that he wants to get three sections if possible, and that the railroad wants to haul us in two sections. When we got to the station I jump out quick, run into the station and begin a telegram to the division superintendent, before Mr. Sells can get in. I get it written just after he comes in. He reads it over, likes it and tells me to send it at once. Then he says that he wants me to stay at the station, get the answer and use my judgement as to what to say in response, signing his name.

Having given this wide latitude he got back into his wagon, starts up "General" and drives away. Sat around the office a while waiting for the telegram from the superintendent and then went out of doors. The day was fine, so found a shady place on a pile of ties across the track from the station and sat down. Saw some long freight trains go through and a passenger train from Erie, bound to Philadelphia. After enjoying the fresh air and the scenery for a while decided that Mr. Preston had had time enough to think the matter over and so went back to the station agent's office, only to find that I was wrong. In about twenty minutes more the answer does come, though, and I learn that he doesn't think it necessary to give us three sections, his telegram winding up with a refusal to accede to our wishes. That ended the matter, so I wired back that we wanted the motive power for two sections ready to move the trains as soon as they were loaded, and then we would begin loading at five o'clock. Lock Haven is a small town and has no street cars. The lot is about a mile away, and I have to walk out, but as there was a good sidewalk all the way, rather enjoyed it. Showed Mr. Preston's telegram and my answer to Mr. Lew and he approves of my action. As there is to be no night performance all the circus people straggled off one by one as soon as the afternoon performance was over, but I stayed around a while with Mr. Lew, seeing that things

No



Diavolo was one of the many popular thrill acts featured on turn of the century shows. The text of this article indicates that Diavolo was a real trouper. Pfening collection.

involved in some sort of a discussion with Hassan Ali, the Egyptian giant. Hassan doesn't know English much, and was consequently at a disadvantage. So, to make things even he hits Diavolo in the eye, and completely closes it and somewhat injures the other eye. Now Diavolo is the show's strong point and compared with it, Mr. Lew would let any other act go by the board any day. But it seemed manifestly impossible for Diavolo to ride the loop with one eye shut up, and the question was what to do. The situation was seized upon by one of the men with the show, Hayes, a trick bicyclist who rides with the Jackson Family. He has been anxious to ride the loop and when he heard that Diavolo was laid up he at once hastened off to find Mr. Sells and to tell him that he was ready to save the reputation of the circus. But Diavolo showed up on time and with one bandaged tight rode the loop as well as ever. About every person connected with the circus who could get into the tent at the time was on hand to see who did the ride and the common opinion was that Hayes would have made the trip all right. Incidentally, I might say that when I left the show at Columbus, over a week later, Diavolo was still riding with one eye. During the afternoon I got a telegram from Louis Thompson, announcing Reuben Butrick's marriage.

Butler, Pa., August 2. 122 Miles.

Woke up at Red Bank, and found that we were a long ways from Butler. Got up about seven o'clock and enjoyed the scenery, which was wild and rugged, for we were running through the Allegheny Mountains. While we were at breakfast we ran through Kittanning, which is quite a large place. At

Kiskiminetas Junction the engine on the second section broke down and we got to Butler at noon. Think of that, for a circus. When Mr. Lew and I drove onto the lot about 12:40 the big top was partly up and the menagerie all up. Being by this time recognized on the lot as Mr. Lew's right hand man, we (Mr. Lew and myself) start in to get ready for a performance. I find Jack Shoemate, superintendent of stock, and notify him that the big band wagon only will constitute the parade. Then I hunt up Frank Melville, equestrian director, and give him the same information. There never was better work done in any circus than the Forepaugh-Sells men did in Butler. We had the tent up and ready, all save the loop, and started the performance at three o'clock. The loop men were working on the loop right up to the time that Diavolo came out with his bicycle. But we gave the whole programme, without a change. Night performance went off all right and Mr. Lew and I drove down to the car at nine o'clock, the usual time. Went to bed at half past ten and went right to sleep.

Sunday, August 3.

First we thought we would never get to Butler, and then we thought we'd never get away. I was awakened early in the morning by a terrible bump and just as I got my eyes open there was another jar and the train came to a stop. Then I heard Mr. Lew call out: "Are we off the track?" I answered that I didn't know, but that I would go and see. It was still dark and I was already groping for my clothes. While I was getting dressed I heard Harry Potter come along down the side of the train and calling out to us that nobody was hurt. I got outside as soon as possible and ran up toward the head of the train. We were running in three sections that night and our section, when such was the makeup, was eighteen cars long. Found that the fourth elephant car, and the fourth car from the engine, the elephant cars always being the first cars in the train, was off the track and on its side in the ditch. That is it was leaning up against the bank, at an angle of about 45 degrees. I got all the particulars from Emory, the head elephant man and skipped back to No. 4 to report. It was then just half past four. Then Mr. Sells sent me out to find out where we were and I soon found that we were still in Butler, and about a half a mile from the station. In other words we had just got started to leave the town. Well, there isn't much more to tell except that we were until 4:30 in the afternoon getting away. The wrecking train came from Pittsburgh, arriving about noon. The car had eight elephants in it, and they were in pretty bad shape when we got them out, about one in the afternoon. One, a little fellow, was almost suffocated under



At its zenith around 1902, the Forepaugh-Sells Circus was one of the finest circuses in an era of fine circuses. Ringling Museum of the Circus.

the weight of the big fellows on top of him, but as they got to the fresh air they came around all right. Our trouble here, however, was not confined to the elephant car. It was a terribly hot day and about ten o'clock, when Patterson, in charge of the caged animals, opened the cages to water, he found that Sultan, our finest black maned lion of his kind in the country, was dead, suffocated. Mr. Lew had been offered \$2,500 for him. In addition, Empress, a fine lion, was almost dead and the three little cubs were gasping. The hose was turned on the ones that were still alive and by night they were all right again. Butler is not a large town and it was with difficulty that we got any dinner, but Fred DeWolfe and I went up-town and got enough together for a half way dinner and Mr. Lew and Fred and myself dined on the car. Of course the wreck attracted a great crowd and when we finally drew out of the town, a large proportion of the populace watched us go.

Spent the rest of the afternoon and night in trying to get to Wheeling. Got to Pittsburgh about nine o'clock in the evening and ran clear around the city to Glenwood Junction, where we struck the Wheeling division of the Baltimore and Ohio. Mr. Lew went to bed at nine o'clock, tired out, but told me that he guessed I'd better stay up till the train got through Glenwood Junction, and see that everything was all right. I stayed up, but I was never so sleepy in my life. And as soon as we started out of Glenwood I shook my clothes and got into bed as quick as I could.

Wheeling, W. Va., August 4.

Expected to make Wheeling some time during the night, but when I

awoke the train was still in motion, and running through a very wild country, the Pan-Handle of West Virginia. Dressed as we were going into Wheeling where for the first time in my life I saw natural gas burning free from the end of a pipe as a street light. Ran across the principal street of the city and stopped in the B.&O. yard on the bank of the Ohio ...

Ellsworth stayed on the show through the August 9 stand at Columbus, Ohio. While the remainder of Ellsworth's account of his vacation is lacking, it does not detract from the valuable glimpse of circus life provided by what is reproduced here.

I wish to acknowledge my thanks to Wendell Tripp of the New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown, for permission to reproduce as well as for biographical information on Ellsworth; to Edward J. Blackman of St. Lawrence University, Canton, N.Y., for additional biographical information; and to Howard C. Tibbals of Oneida, Tenn., for checking his rare copy of the 1902 Forepaugh-Sells route book.

FOOTNOTES

1. Delaware, Lackawanna, and Western.
2. Mr. Thompson is probably Charles N. Thompson, a good friend of Ellsworth's who was general manager according to a note in his copy of *On The Road With A Circus*, p. 197. Thompson also had a pit show on the midway which is visible in the book's frontispiece and had been business manager of the show in 1899 according to that year's route book.
3. W.W. Cole was a partner of James A. Bailey, Peter Sells, and Lewis Sells in the ownership of the Forepaugh-Sells show.
4. In the country or out of it, either is an indirect reference to James A. Bailey, then touring Europe with the Barnum & Bailey Circus.
5. Cleopatra's Barge was for many years a parade feature on the old Forepaugh show beginning in 1882. Its history is briefly covered in Richard E. Conover, *The Great Forepaugh Show* (Xenia, Ohio: the author, 1959) pp. 7-8.

The Circus Winter Quarters

in West Baden, Ind.

Photo Supplement

by Joseph T. Bradbury

In the Sept.-Oct. 1972 *Bandwagon* I had an article entitled "The Circus Winter Quarters in West Baden, Indiana". Unfortunately at the time very few photos were available for illustration, especially shots picturing wagons which were stored there up until the early 30's and whose ultimate fate (other than disintegration due to time and weather) has long been one of the unsolved circus mysteries. As *Bandwagon* readers are aware, it is the policy of the magazine to welcome any and all new photos that may later turn up which would shed more light on an article previously published. These "new" photos are run as supplements and in the past we have had as many as two or three for such subjects as the Buck Jones Wild West Show of 1929 and Great American Circus of 1939.

We are pleased to feature three additional photos of wagons in the old West Baden graveyard dated about 1933. These were a part of the Don Smith collection.

Two shots depict the clown bandwagon which was used by John Robinson in 1924 and also, in all probability, in 1925, the final season for street parades on that show. It may be recalled the show went out in 1925 intending not to parade but after about a month on the road the parade was restored by all three American Circus Corporation units, traditionally to combat the new Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Wild West Show which featured a daily march. This wagon originated as a tableau-den on the Adam Forepaugh Circus, was later on Forepaugh-Sells, and in 1913 was on Rice Bros. The exact date it came to Mugivan and Bowers is not known to the author but it was probably 1914 or shortly thereafter. At one time it was on Howe's Great London but not in 1921 according to the late Bill Woodcock, Sr., where logically it should have been so as to be positively on John Robinson in 1924. That year it was No. 27 and used as the clown bandwagon, and came to West Baden when the John Robinson Circus was sent there to winter following the 1924 season.

To get the correct picture on the circumstances of how this wagon happened to be parked in the West Baden graveyard in a derelict condition in 1933 it is well to review the brief history of quarters. They were located on the estate of Edward Ballard, who



Photo No. 1 - Tableau wagon, No. 27, which was used as the clown bandwagon on John Robinson's Circus in 1924 is

pictured here at the West Baden, Ind. quarters about 1933. Fred D. Pfening, Jr. (Don Smith) Collection.



Photo No. 2 - This photo taken at the old West Baden quarters about 1933 shows the John Robinson clown bandwagon used in 1924 (Tableau No.

27), at left and one of the old quarters barns at right. In between is a baggage wagon which was probably used by Gentry Bros. 1929.

owned the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus, and that show was first sent there to winter following the 1915 season. West Baden remained the Hagenbeck-Wallace winter quarters even after Ballard joined with Mugivan and Bowers in 1919. At the conclusion of the 1924 season Hagenbeck-Wallace went into quarters at Peru, Ind. while John Robinson, which had previously wintered in Peru headed for West Baden. John Robinson then used West Baden for its quarters through the winter of 1927-28 and following the 1928 season moved into Peru quarters along with the other two Mugivan, Bowers, and Ballard, shows, Hagenbeck-Wallace and Sells-Floto.

I do not know when this wagon was last carried by John Robinson but to

have been left in West Baden it could have been no later than the 1927 season. It's interesting to note that only one of the former parade wagons used by John Robinson lasted on the show through its final season of 1930, that being the Old Dode Fisk bandwagon which was the No. 2 bandwagon in 1924, unless the sideshow bandwagon, a rather plain wagon with a full sideview painting, was remodeled into an unrecognizable vehicle. Tradition has long held that a quarters fire in West Baden about 1927 destroyed the Robinson No. 1 bandwagon and steam calliope. The air calliope ended up in Peru after service as a remodeled baggage wagon on Heritage Bros. in 1926.

Photo No. 3 shows what is believed to

Photo No. 3 - Cage wagon at left and portion of a baggage wagon at right resting in the old wagon graveyard at West Baden, Indiana, about 1933. The cage was probably used by Hagenbeck-Wallace and left there when the show went into quarters in Peru following the 1924 season. It does not resemble any that John Robinson had when it was quartered in West Baden 1924-28 and the Gentry Bros. 1929 cages later stored there were very small.

have been a cage used by Hagenbeck-Wallace and undoubtedly left in West Baden after that show moved to quarters in Peru. Three long former Hagenbeck-Wallace dens with wheels and gears removed served as permanent cages in the animal barn at West Baden in the early 20's. Their final fate is shrouded in mystery.

In any event these photos constitute an exciting new find, and hopefully other West Baden shots will turn up in the future.

CORRECTION

In the January February 1979 issue an advertisement appeared for a forthcoming book covering the history of Noell's Ark Gorilla Show.

In the ad a typographical error listed "world's only authentic apes." This should have read "world's only ATHLETIC apes." Sorry about that Noells.

PUBLICATION SCHEDULE

It is the intention of the editor to place each issue of the BANDWAGON in the mail near the end of the second month of issue date.

However due to travel it is not always possible to remain on schedule.

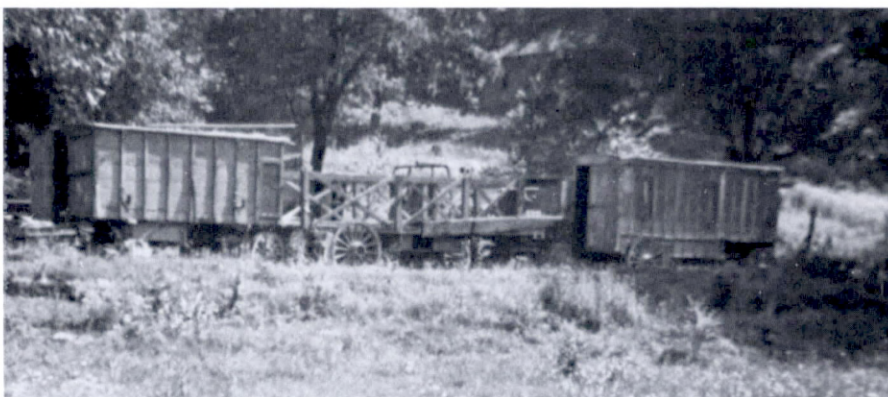
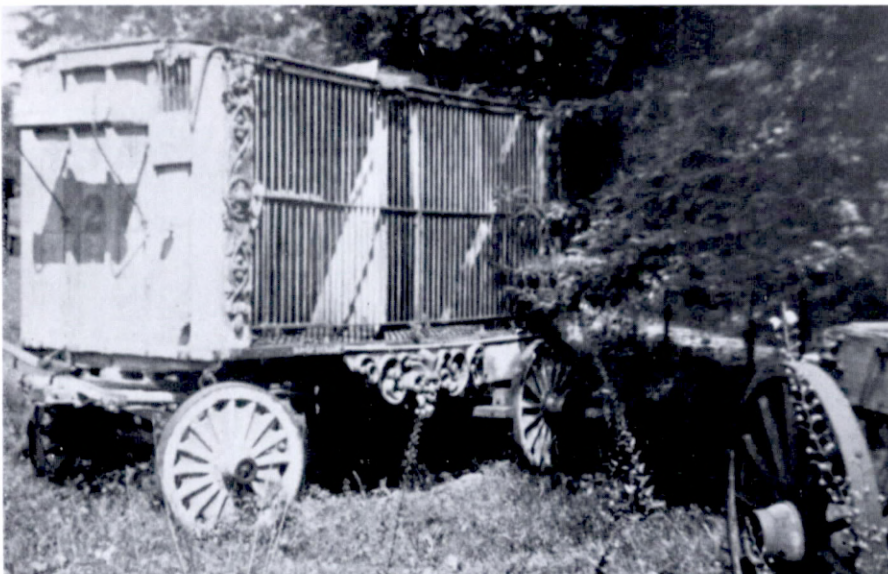


Photo No. 4 - Gentry Bros. baggage wagons at the old West Baden, Indiana quarters about 1933. Wagon in center is the seat stringer wagon that was used on

the King's 15 car circus 1926-29. It is shown loaded on a flat car in the 1927 installment printed in the Jan-Feb '78 Bandwagon. Don Smith Collection.

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This lithograph was used by the King Bros. 1930 Cole Bros. Circus. It was printed by the National Printing & Engraving Co., of Chicago, Illinois. National furnished most of the paper for the 1930 show and held a mortgage on the show. A number of copies of this litho remained on the shelves of National and the poster was used in 1935 by the new Adkins & Terrell Cole Bros. Clyde Beatty Circus. Original in Pfening Collection.